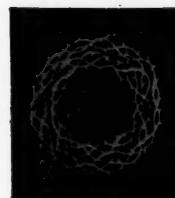
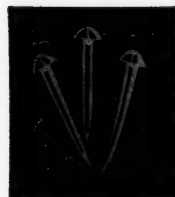


February, 1959

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# LIGUORIAN



*The Worst Sin against  
Fraternal Charity*

*Wasted Opportunities  
for Holy Communion*

*Fears about Old Age*

*Three Grades of  
Catholics in Lent*

YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH,

AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.





# THE Liguorian

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*Devoted to the  
Unchangeable Principles  
of Truth, Justice,  
Democracy and Religion,  
and to All That  
Brings Happiness to  
Human Beings*

•

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NUMBER 2

THE LIGUORIAN IS INDEXED  
IN THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX

THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

# THE WORST SIN

## AGAINST

### FRATERNAL CHARITY

Fraternal charity imposes many obligations, and may be violated by many different sins. But one of these sins has greater malice than any other. Read this carefully and learn whether you can say of yourself, "Not Guilty!"

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

**A**MONG the many sins by which a person may violate the divine precept of fraternal charity imposed upon all His followers by Jesus Christ, there is one that stands out for malice and viciousness. It is the sin of giving serious scandal to others.

This is the worst sin against fraternal charity because it contributes to the most terrible tragedy that can befall a human being, namely, the loss of his immortal soul. It is contrary to charity to inflict unnecessary pain on a fellow human being even here in this world. But it is vastly worse to contribute in any real way to a soul's everlasting damnation in hell.

This last is just what a person does by giving serious scandal. That is why

our Lord spoke with such violent condemnation of those who are guilty of this sin. "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged around his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals. It needs be that scandals must come: but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." (Matt. 18:6-7)

The topic is therefore exceedingly important. It is also quite complicated. Some people have very lax ideas about scandal, or seem unaware of its terrible malice. Others have scrupulous ideas about the same sin. Therefore it will be explained rather thoroughly here, so that each reader may examine his conscience, and at

the same time inform his conscience on this matter.

The explanation will be divided into five parts. 1. The definition and explanation of what scandal is. 2. The different kinds of scandal. 3. Common examples of scandal. 4. The special malice of scandal. 5. The obligation of repairing scandal.

## 1. WHAT SCANDAL IS

**S**CANDAL is to be found in any word or deed or even omission that is evil in itself, or has the unnecessary appearance of evil, and that can be the occasion of spiritual damage to another.

Note some of the phrases in this definition. It is quite clear that words and actions may lead others into sin and therefore bear the weight of scandal. But even sinful omissions are included. For example, a mother and father who carelessly miss Mass on Sunday are giving scandal to their growing children by helping them to look without fear on the mortal sin of missing Sunday Mass.

The definition also states that an action that has the appearance of evil, even though it is not evil in itself, may constitute the sin of scandal. Suppose an invalidly married Catholic couple has received, from the proper authority in the Church, the permission to continue to live in the same house, but as brother and sister, and therefore to return to the sacraments. As long as this permission is not publicly known, it would be wrong for them to receive Communion in any church where anybody might possibly know of their invalid

marriage. If they did, it would appear to the one or many who knew of their bad marriage that they were sacrilegiously receiving Holy Communion, or even that the Catholic Church was approving of the sacrilege. For that reason they would be bound to receive the sacraments in a church where they were completely unknown.

Further, the definition states that scandal is present when the evil word or act or omission "can be" the occasion of spiritual harm to another. This is to signify that it is not necessary that the spiritual harm actually follows; it is only necessary that it might easily follow. Thus a boy who tries to induce a girl friend to commit an evil action with him is guilty of the mortal sin of scandal even though she resists his efforts and remains free from sin.

In the rare case, however, of persons who are so strong and mature in virtue that it is obvious that the evil actions and words of others would never influence them, such words and actions would be free from the guilt of scandal. The rareness of such cases affords small comfort to those who place scandal in the way of others.

Finally, the word "occasion" of spiritual harm is used in the definition, not the word "cause." No one actually causes another to commit sin, because the primary cause of sin is a person's own bad will. But one person can have a wide variety of degrees of influence over others, and thus become the occasion of their choosing to sin.



## 2. THE KINDS OF SCANDAL

**T**HE most important division of scandal is into direct and indirect. Direct scandal is that whereby one person deliberately tries to induce another to commit a sin.

This in turn can be what is rightly called diabolic, in that the scandal-giver primarily wants nothing but to hurt another spiritually. Thus a fallen-away Catholic may urge another Catholic to commit a sin just for the satisfaction of seeing a good person become bad. There is no worse form of scandal than that.

Usually, however, direct scandal is motivated by self-interest or desire for pleasure. Thus a boy friend is ordinarily guilty of the direct scandal of leading his girl friend to cooperate in sinful actions with him chiefly for the sake of the pleasure he desires.

Indirect scandal is that in which the sinner does not directly intend or urge another to commit a sin, but knows that his words or actions or omissions may easily have that effect. Thus the teller of obscene stories may have no intention of leading others into sin, but he should know that those who hear him may be strongly tempted to bad thoughts and desires by his stories, and thus he is guilty of indirect scandal.

Giving scandal may also be a mortal sin or a venial sin, according to the degree of spiritual damage one's words or actions or omissions may make possible for others. To draw others into unkind but not serious gossip about the absent is the venial sin of scandal, because the result is a

venial sin. To encourage or urge, or by example to lead, others into any mortal sin, would itself be the mortal sin of scandal.

A few further distinctions must be made.

There is the scandal that is taken by the weak, or those who are morally corrupt, from the good or indifferent actions of others. For example, weak or evil men will sometimes have bad thoughts or make obscene remarks at the sight of a decently dressed girl. Such scandal-taking may be ignored, unless with no great inconvenience it is possible for a girl to stay away from areas where such men are known to be found.

Then there is the kind of scandal that was taken by the Pharisees from our Lord. They gave way to envy and hatred and false accusations just because He was good and merciful and just. So too, today, some persons are moved to hatred and calumny by the good actions of priests or devout Catholics. Such scandal-taking has to be ignored.

Last of all, the word "scandalous" is sometimes used improperly in regard to actions that are not evil in themselves, and that have no really evil effect on others. For example, one who has been brought up with the conviction that any kind of gambling is a sin, or that drinking anything alcoholic is a sin, might call it scandalous that others engage in playing cards for nominal stakes, or have beer with their meals. Since these actions, when conformed to reason, are not evil in themselves, and do not

cause anyone else to sin, they are not properly spoken of as tinged with scandal.

### 3. COMMON EXAMPLES OF SCANDAL

**E**XAMPLES of *direct scandal* come promptly to mind, and their terrible malice should be quickly recognized.

Whenever one person urges, or advises, or coaxes, or (holding some authority) commands another person to commit a mortal sin, he is guilty of the mortal sin of direct scandal, whether he succeeds in his intent or not. Thus a wife urging her husband to practice contraception (and vice versa), a boy friend coaxing his girl to take part in indecent actions, a parent commanding a child to steal something of great value, would thereby be guilty of grave and direct scandal. Friends insisting that one of their number drink till he is totally intoxicated are similarly guilty.

A common form of direct scandal, made light of by some even though it is a mortal sin, is that in which relatives or friends of a validly married but divorced Catholic urge him (or her) to keep steady company and even attempt remarriage. This is an especially grievous form of scandal because one who enters a bad marriage has to renounce the sacraments, begins a continuing life of sin, and finds it very difficult to give up the bad marriage and to repent and escape from his sins. Therefore urging anyone into an invalid marriage is truly setting him on the path to hell.

It is also grave and direct scandal to write, publish, sell, lend, or give away lewd books, obscene pamphlets, impure pictures, which by their very nature offer strong inducements to bad thoughts and desires and actions in those who read or see them.

Girls and women can be guilty of grave and direct scandal by deliberately dressing and appearing in public in so immodest a way that they know they will attract lustful glances, desires and even approaches from men who see them.

One final example of direct scandal: Surely it is a most serious sin of scandal to argue with others against the truths of religion, to speak to them disparagingly or contemptuously of the power of prayer, or the Mass, or the Blessed Mother, or any of the sacraments. It is direct scandal to criticize and condemn priests and bishops so bitterly that others are bound to be strongly tempted to become anti-clerical and disobedient to lawful authority. It is grave and direct scandal for a husband to ridicule and place obstacles to his wife's attempts to live up to the important duties of her religion.

While direct scandal is quite easy to recognize, *indirect scandal* is often overlooked and minimized, even though it is often as gravely sinful as direct scandal. The difference is that in indirect scandal one does not urge his own evil attitudes or conduct on others; he merely does or says evil things with the knowledge that those who see and hear him may be influenced toward some form of evil.

Therefore most forms of indirect scandal come under the heading of bad example, but specifically bad example that one knows may have a damaging spiritual effect on others.

Surely the bad example of parents in missing Mass on Sunday, in talking obscenely, in slandering others seriously, can have a very evil effect on their growing children, even though they desire no such effect and do not urge their sins on the children. Therefore the bad example itself makes them guilty of scandal.

The bad example of Catholics who attend an invalid marriage ceremony of a Catholic relative or friend, or take part in showers and parties for the couple involved, inevitably makes the latter think less seriously of the great sin they are committing, and can make other Catholics look less seriously on the sanctity of marriage. It is therefore serious scandal.

The bad example of anyone who holds authority over others always has, by reason of that very authority, an especially evil effect. Parents, employers, teachers, civil officials, who are openly guilty of grave sins must accept the added guilt of making it easier for others, especially their subjects, to commit the same sins. This is scandal.

Even in social gatherings among equals, the bad example of one person is often the occasion for the serious sins of others. One person drinking gravely to excess can draw others along with him into the same sin. One person telling a gravely obscene story can be responsible for a whole round

of such stories being told. One person starting a conversation about the secret serious sins of an absent acquaintance can unleash the tongues of others and draw out all sorts of defamatory stories. Thus does bad example become serious scandal.

#### 4. THE MALICE OF SCANDAL

IT IS often not realized that scandal adds a new guilt to the specific evil of the actions or words or omissions from which it springs. It is the specific guilt of assisting others to defile their souls and to offend God.

Therefore when a person has committed a sin in which others were involved, or that led to the sins of others, he has an obligation, when seeking forgiveness through confession, to make known to the confessor not only the sin itself, but also the scandal he was aware of giving to others by his sin. Ordinarily, however, when a person confesses a sin that involved the mutual consent of another, the confessor takes the scandal for granted, and it need not be specially mentioned.

Thus parents who take their children on a Sunday picnic without going to Mass, or who merely by their example, have made it easy for their children to miss Mass, should confess not only that they missed Mass on Sunday without a reason, but also that they occasioned their children to miss Mass as well. In similar cases, even when actually the bad example was not followed, or when the children went to Mass despite obstacles set up by their parents, the latter

should confess having given scandal to their children.

Here it should be noted once more, lest persons with tender consciences draw scrupulous conclusions, that the mortal sin of scandal is committed only when occasions for *mortal* sins are given to others. Venial sins of scandal should not be made light of, for example, leading others into the telling of small lies, or minor gossiping, or any other lessening of virtue or committing of venial sins. But they remain in the category of venial sins.

#### 5. REPARATION OF SCANDAL

One who has given scandal is bound as soon as he repents of his sin and seeks forgiveness, to do everything in his power to remove any continuing scandal, and to repair whatever spiritual damage he has done to others. This is clear from the basic principle that charity binds everybody to try to save others from sin or from danger of sin. This principle applies with multiplied force to those who have been occasions of sin for others.

The manner of repairing scandal must be chosen according to the manner in which the scandal was given,

and to the opportunities that are at hand. Scandal that was given by bad example can often be corrected by good example — especially by determined and devout good example. Scandal that was given by urging others to sin, or by damaging talk against religion or sacred things, must be repaired by more direct and humbling means.

A boy who led a girl into sin must definitely tell her of his sorrow, of his desire that she too seek forgiveness, of his determination never to be an occasion of sin for her again. A man who has argued against the truths of religion (knowing better in his heart, as most such persons do) must be willing to express in some way to those who heard him his renunciation of all such foolish talk.

In conclusion, this may surely be said: On the final day of judgment the public shame and misery of those who have to be condemned to hell by God will be multiplied beyond measure by the accusing fingers of those whom they have scandalized and led into sin. Then they will fully realize what it means to help another soul along the path to hell.

---

#### THE READY ANSWER

The Catholic apologist, making a street-corner talk, was asked this: "If you say that the Catholic Church alone is true, why doesn't it make better men?"

The speaker, turning swiftly to the interrupter, caught his listeners by surprise when he answered: "But it does."

Then he went on to say: "I do not mean that I am better than you, nor than anyone else. That is because I do not live up to the fulness of grace. But the Church has produced men like St. Francis of Assisi and women like St. Therese of Lisieux. And no other religion has ever dared to claim, infallibly, that any of its members have gone to heaven."

*Central California Register*

# Three Grades of Catholics in Lent

To which grade do you belong?

*James Post, C.S.S.R.*

Here you will find the signs which mark Catholics as Grade A, Grade B or Grade C Catholics, according to the way in which they think and act in regard to Lent.

\* \* \*

*Grade A Catholic:* Welcomes Lent as a time of spiritual opportunity — for penance, prayer and growth in the love of God.

*Grade B Catholic:* Looks forward to Lent with distaste and grumbling, as a time of unnecessary hardship.

*Grade C Catholic:* Keeps the thought of Lent completely out of his mind, except when getting ashes on Ash Wednesday.

\* \* \*

*Grade A:* Fasts and abstains according to the serious law of the Church, unless a definite and serious reason provides an excuse.

*Grade B:* Makes up an excuse for not fasting, or takes the benefit of

a doubt without consulting anyone.

*Grade C:* Doesn't even consider fasting for a moment — and laughs at anybody who does, even though it is a serious law of the Church.

\* \* \*

*Grade A:* Willingly gives up little pleasures and amusements, such as candy or movies or smoking or a favorite dessert.

*Grade B:* Talks big about giving up something in Lent, but never really does so; or, if he starts, soon breaks the resolve.

*Grade C:* Won't deprive himself of any pleasure he wants — Lent or no Lent.

\* \* \*

*Grade A:* Attends evening services at least once a week during Lent, for the sake of needed instruction from sermons and the extra prayers.

*Grade B:* Resolves, with a great show of courage, to go to evening services *sometimes*, but whenever social engagements interfere, he forgets about the services.

*Grade C:* Can't be bothered with evening services during Lent or at any other time. (Shows it, too, by his ignorance of his religion.)

*Grade A:* Receives Communion every day, or at least every Sunday during Lent.

*Grade B:* Decides he ought to go to Communion a few times during Lent, but can't seem to find time to get to confession until about the fourth or fifth week.

*Grade C:* Says brazenly: "I go to Communion once a year. That is plenty for me. I'll be there at Easter."

*Grade A:* Makes the way of the cross once in a while to keep mindful of the sufferings of Christ for His creatures.

*Grade B:* Doesn't like the stations because they take too long.

*Grade C:* Wouldn't even know how to begin making the way of the cross.

*Grade A:* Feels stronger, happier, more grateful to God when Lent is finally over.

*Grade B:* Feels miserable when Lent is over because of all the broken resolutions, wasted opportunities, and resulting dissatisfaction with self.

*Grade C:* Doesn't feel any different when Lent is over because he has not even awakened to his own worldliness, pride and sinfulness which still remain.

Now is the time to decide to which of the three grades of Catholics you want to belong.

Make up your mind!

#### PRAYER FOR ANYBODY

My sovereign Queen, the Lord has heaped thee with riches, the better to help the poor. He has enthroned thee Queen of Mercy, the better to come to the aid of the wretched. So then, turn thine eyes of tender mercy upon poor and wretched me. Abandon me not till thou make of me a saint.

*St. Alphonsus*

#### NO ESCAPE

There is no escaping God. We may deny Him, we may ignore Him, we may drink our fill of the cup of life, we may drink down to the dregs of the world, the flesh and the devil in an endeavor to keep Him out of sight; but the still, small Voice is always there.

*Owen Dudley*



## Thoughts for the Shut-in

### Prince of Misfortunes

Leonard F. Hyland, C.S.S.R.

A CLOSE acquaintance with the Bible should provide the sick with much strength and courage. The Gospels, for example, are filled with instances in which our Saviour manifested His tender love and care for the ailing. But Christ was God, and therefore He showed the love of God Himself for the sick.

In the Old Testament also many consoling passages can be found. Consider, for example, the strange and wonderful Old Testament Book of Job. Here you have the picture of a man who is made to suffer "with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of the foot even to the top of his head." The question which the book strives to answer is why must Job suffer? Why must any man suffer from illness and pain?

The book of Job begins with the patriarch being described as a man who was simple and upright, blessed with a large family, and extremely rich in the goods of this world. But Satan arrogantly suggests to God that Job is a mere time-server, and that if he were to lose his earthly comforts, he would quickly give up his allegiance to God.

God, however, has confidence in His servant, and in order that Job's faith and courage might shine forth in adversity, He permits the evil spirit to afflict Job in every possible way. His sheep are stolen, his servants are killed, his seven sons and three daughters lose their lives in a violent tornado. And finally Job is made to suffer the physical pain and the humiliation of being covered with ulcers from head to foot.

In this sad predicament, first his wife, and then three friends come to commiserate with him and to reproach him. The burden of their reproach is that God never afflicts the innocent. Job must have committed many and great sins to deserve such punishment. Let him confess his sins and then die; there can be no other meaning to his afflictions.

In a long conversation extending through some 35 chapters Job defends himself against his three friends' mounting accusations that he must be a great sinner indeed to have brought on himself such sorrows. But then suddenly God's voice is heard speaking in accents that cannot be denied. "Who is this," God asks, "that wraps up sentences in unskillful words?" He goes on then to point out His power and might as Creator of the world, and that He is not accountable to man for His actions. A man may suffer even though innocent, but in all cases he must learn to trust His God, Who acts with a wisdom far above the wisdom of mere man.

Job's attitude is summed up in his earlier cry: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him," and the triumphant cry, which the Church uses at funeral services: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh I shall see my God."

We commend to shut-ins the reading of the Book of Job for the great lessons in faith and courage which it contains.



Too many Catholics are  
not using the  
wonderful privilege  
granted by the new laws  
in regard to the Eucharistic  
fast. What is the reason?

*WASTED*

## *OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOLY COMMUNION*

HERBERT A. SEIFERT, C.S.S.R.

ONE of the sad things a missionary priest notices in travelling about the country and being present at the Sunday Masses in various churches, is the fact that there are so many, many people not yet making use of the relaxed fasting rules for the reception of Holy Communion. In many instances there are as many as 800 to 1,000 persons present at one of these Masses, but only 40 or 50 of that number receive Holy Communion.

No one can doubt that Pope Pius XII had it in mind to change this picture when, using his supreme authority to make or relax positive laws for the faithful, he so drastically reduced the fasting requirements for the reception of Holy Communion.

Today, Catholics have very easy rules to follow in regard to the fast

before Holy Communion. Here are the rules:

1. GENERAL RULE (applicable to all)

- a. Fast for three hours before receiving Communion from solid foods and alcoholic liquids.
- b. Fast for one hour before receiving Communion from non-alcoholic liquids, for example, juices, coffee, milk, etc.
- c. Water may be taken at any time.

2. SPECIAL RULE FOR THE SICK (even those not confined to bed)

- a. Fast for three hours before receiving Communion from solid foods and alcoholic liquids.
- b. Any true medicine (solid or liquid), non-alcoholic liquids, water may be taken at any time.

Note these points:

1. The above rules apply no matter when Communion is received, whether in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening or even at midnight Mass.
2. The time is measured from the moment the last bite or swallow is taken until the moment Communion is received.
3. No special permission of a priest or confessor is needed — the rules apply to all.
4. The medicine taken by the sick may have alcohol in it, as long as it is a true and commonly accepted medicine.

When these present regulations were published, the Holy Father urged priests and the faithful to observe the old Eucharistic fast, if they are able to do it; but they are not *obliged* to do so. However, "those who make use of these privileges should compensate by becoming shining examples of a Christian life, and principally by works of penance and charity."

Consider what all this means. If you take a full breakfast of bacon and eggs and toast and coffee before 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, you may receive Holy Communion at 12 o'clock or after on that day. You may drink orange juice and coffee up to 11 o'clock on Sunday and still receive Holy Communion at 12 noon or thereafter. You may drink all the water you want right up to the time of receiving Holy Communion.

### Return to Early Christian Days

THESE laws should make it possible for us to witness a return to the practice and custom of the early Church. To be present for the Mass and to receive our Lord at that Mass, was for the early Christians the normal procedure. It was almost unthinkable to take part in the Eucharistic service without partaking of the Eucharistic Banquet. However, instead of merely admiring the large number of present-day communicants, for example at our Sunday Masses, we might ask, "Why does not the entire congregation receive at each Mass? Why is it that only about one fourth of the people receive at the earlier Masses and so few at the later Masses on Sundays?"

What are the main reasons why many of our Catholic people who attend Sunday Mass regularly do not receive Holy Communion for months?

There are a number of reasons. The most valid of all reasons is that some persons are conscious of having committed one or more serious sins since their last good confession and have not yet gone to confession. It is true, you have to be free from mortal sin to receive Holy Communion. If you committed a mortal sin since your last good confession, you are bound, in ordinary circumstances, to go to confession before receiving Holy Communion.

But nobody can tell us that out of 800 people attending an 11 or 12 o'clock Mass on a Sunday, 750 may not receive Holy Communion because of unconfessed mortal sins.

Possibly a few score may find themselves in that sad state, but certainly not one half or even one fourth of them.

What then? Too many Catholics are simply not using the wonderful privilege granted to them by the Holy Father.

The persons who are prevented from receiving Communion because they have unconfessed mortal sin upon their conscience should make every effort to get to confession and then to the Communion rail. They need the grace and strength derived from receiving Jesus Christ in Holy Communion much more than the people who are habitually living in the friendship of Christ. Again, in order to make certain that our sins will be forgiven in confession we must at least be determined to use the ordinary means to avoid these sins in the future. Surely, one of the ordinary means to avoid sin is the devout reception of the sacraments — especially Holy Communion. This practice will help them to remain free from mortal sin and to live constantly in the friendship of God, so that they will be able to receive Holy Communion on any day of the week — even on all days of the week!

#### Other Reasons

**O**THERS will say, "I cannot receive at Sunday Mass because I break my fast before going to Mass. I take my breakfast shortly before going to Mass."

As to breaking the fast before receiving, we admit that it requires some sacrifice to keep even the miti-

gated fast we now have. But is the price too great for what we receive? Is it asking too much to pay so little for a gift of infinite value? We do not appreciate what comes too easily. A sacrifice of this kind is no doubt most pleasing to our Lord. It is true, we cannot sleep until a late hour, then hurry through breakfast, rush to Mass and receive Holy Communion. In the light of the sacrifices and difficulties of former days, when not a particle of food or drop of water was allowed to pass our lips after midnight if we wished to receive, the new laws are easy and present very little difficulty for those of faith and good will.

Most people, we think, would say, "I do not receive oftener because I have not been to confession." Or, "It is so difficult for me to get to confession before I receive."

We do not ask ourselves before Communion, "Have I been to confession?" There is no law saying that confession must in all instances precede receiving Holy Communion. We are strictly obliged to receive the sacrament of penance before Communion only when we are conscious of a deliberate serious sin committed since our last good confession. If our good-living people (and certainly about 90% are of that kind) would only remember this, the number of communicants would be doubled and trebled.

Already in 1905, about 53 years ago, St. Pius X issued an encyclical letter on Holy Communion in which

he told us very definitely that the only condition for a worthy Communion, as far as our soul is concerned, is to be free from serious sin and to have the proper intention when receiving. (This last condition merely means that we must receive from spiritual motives, such as to increase in grace and the love of God and not out of routine, pride or vanity.)

A very common difficulty presents itself at once in the minds of many devout people. "Since I never know which of my sins are serious, I never know if I am allowed or worthy to receive at Sunday or week-day Mass." To settle this once and for always, we need only ask our confessor if any of our usual sins are of a serious nature. Or we might say, "Father, these are my ordinary sins that I find myself guilty of. Could I have gone to Holy Communion without this previous confession?" We shall find that in most instances our sins are not mortal. Many people think such sins as anger, profanity, bad language, lying, irreverent use of God's name, impatience, talking about the faults of others, missing prayers, passing bad thoughts and desires, listening to or telling immodest jokes are serious sins. They are not. Let us make it a fast rule to abide by the decision of the confessor with regard to confession before Holy Communion.

If you say, "I wouldn't want to receive with such sins on my soul," we answer that you can remove those venial sins without going to confession; for example, by a good act of contrition. Even the very act of re-

ceiving with the love of God and true sorrow in our heart will remove such venial sins.

Furthermore, even if we did not remove these sins by confession or by the above means, our Communion would still be worthy, since venial sin does not destroy the love of God in our soul. It is better, indeed, to receive more worthily by cleansing our soul from venial sins so that we will derive more benefit from Holy Communion, but the confession of venial sin prior to receiving is certainly not necessary. Think of all the people, priests, religious brothers and sisters and a legion of frequent and daily communicants — they do not go to confession each day. Why not follow their example? No priest or any number of confessors could possibly hear the confessions of all the people who receive so often.

#### Who Is Really Worthy?

TO say, "I do not receive oftener because I don't think I am worthy enough," is not a valid excuse since Holy Communion is not so much a reward for being good as a help to overcome our daily sinfulness. No one is really worthy of so great a privilege and so great a gift. Others might say, "I would go oftener but I don't want to appear so pious, or as a holier-than-thou." When such a large number receive every Sunday do you honestly think your excuse carries much weight? If you receive, you will edify others and give them a good example. How often have we heard people say, "When I see others go so regularly I am in-

spired to do the same." Many find it to be true that as soon as they omit going to Holy Communion regularly their temptations and sins seem to increase.

A final difficulty might be considered. "I experience no special thrill or benefit from frequent Communion. I feel about the same whether I receive on Sunday or whether I do not." Religion is not a matter of feeling. We take and administer medicine regardless of any immediate benefit. We know it will do us good. So our religion teaches us that the frequentation of the sacraments is bound to increase the love of God in our hearts and help us lead better lives.

We must also remember in this connection that we derive benefit from the sacraments in proportion to the disposition with which we receive them. Another thought along this line: if sometimes through a lack of generosity or laziness we do not desire to receive, let us consider that our Lord has a great desire to enter our heart with His love and His grace. Let us receive because He wants us to, even if we do not perceive any immediate benefit. "He that eateth this bread shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

We all greatly desire to maintain sanctifying grace in our hearts. There is no better way under heaven than to receive the source of all grace as often as opportunity permits and devotion prompts us. And where there is devotion there will usually be found sufficient opportunity.

The purpose of this article is not so much to encourage the frequent and daily reception of Holy Communion — most praiseworthy as this practice is — but to encourage the great number of good-living people to receive every Sunday, even without confession. If the question is asked how often should I receive the sacrament of confession we answer that one should abide by the advice of the confessor in this matter.

It is well to remember that there is *no obligation* to receive Holy Communion after going to confession. Again, after omitting Holy Communion a number of times we may again begin to receive provided we have not committed a serious sin.

We encourage especially the men of the parish to present themselves at the Communion rail on Sundays. It is very noticeable that most of the adult communicants are women or young ladies. While the Church speaks of the "devout" female sex, our men, married and single, young and older, should follow the example of the women and so live that they are worthy to receive at the Sunday Mass, even though they have not been to confession.

The family communion, father, mother and children receiving together, is a delight to God and man, an inspiration to the entire parish.

Devout people will say, "I feel there is something missing if I don't go to Mass and Communion every morning." Not everybody is in a position to do this, but a countless num-

ber can receive every Sunday, without previous confession. How it must please a husband, a wife, to see each other receiving so frequently! What a comfort to parents to realize that their teen-age children are seen regularly at the holy table!

The Council of Trent, some 400 years ago, called Holy Communion the antidote which delivers us from our daily faults and preserves us from deadly sins. In 1905, Pope St. Pius X, the Pope of the Blessed Sacrament, wrote these words in his famous encyclical urging frequent, even daily, Communion and the early Communion of children: "Frequent and daily communion will gradually emancipate the faithful from even

venial sins. Union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life is more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues and a pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed. Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred banquet is directed chiefly to the end that they, being united to God by means of the sacrament of the altar, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable. Frequent and daily Holy Communion is the fervent desire of our Lord, the urgent will of the Church and the supreme need of the faithful."

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#### IN CASE OF FIRE!

When a truck caught fire on the highway outside Melbourne, Australia, the driver put in a rush call to two fire departments. The firemen put out the blaze and then inspected the goods the truck was hauling — they found a load of 400 fire extinguishers.

*Crosier*

#### LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from THE LIGUORIAN, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

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#### IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of THE LIGUORIAN and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.

# Problems of Professional People

## The Moral Aspects of a Breast-Milk Bank

**PROBLEM:** I am beginning my medical career, and I find it feasible at times to recommend that infants (especially premature) be provided with natural mother's milk from a so-called "breast-milk bank." I have been wondering, however, if there are any moral problems involved in the procuring and the use of this milk.

**SOLUTION:** We could imagine the case of a mother who would sell the milk provided by nature at the time of child-birth, in such wise that her own infant would be deprived of necessary nourishment; or the case of a mother who would kill her newborn babe in order to sell her milk. Of course, such procedures would be terrible sins, and it is difficult to believe that any woman in her right senses, however immoral she might be otherwise, would commit such shocking crimes. However, these cases are mentioned in order to cover every angle of the moral aspects of the problem presented.

Apart from such hypothetical possibilities, we can say that no sin is committed when a woman donates (or even sells) breast milk for the "bank." On the contrary, when a mother can make a donation to the "bank" without detriment to her own offspring, she is performing a deed of mercy and charity. According to

Dr. Walter Alvarez, formerly of Mayo Clinic, writing in a syndicated column for November 7, 1958, there were in 1955 seven milk banks in the United States and about 100 throughout the world. The milk is contributed and distributed on an entirely gratuitous basis. Doubtless the number of such "banks" has increased more recently. Dr. Alvarez informs us that the lives of many premature babies have been saved by the use of this milk.

Generally speaking, there are three instances in which a woman may lawfully dispose of her milk by a donation (or even sale) to the "bank." 1) When her own child has died; 2) when a supply of milk remains after she has fed her own child sufficiently; 3) when her own child is being fed by some other means within the time when nature continues to supply her breasts.

The first two cases are evident. There might be some question about the third. Indeed, some theologians in the past were wont to accuse a mother of mortal sin if she did not nourish her child in nature's way for a considerable time after birth. Nowadays, however, when prepared foods seem to suffice for most infants, this obligation of nursing the child does not seem to bind (at least gravely). Pediatricians agree that, generally speaking, it is better for the physical and emo-



tional development of the child to be fed at the breast; but there are surely cases when a conscientious doctor will advise against this for some good reason. And a mother can safely follow the advice of such a doctor.

It might be asked if there is any moral problem involved in the donation of milk if a woman has had a child outside of wedlock, which she has given up for adoption shortly after birth. The answer is that, although there was sin in the conception of the child, there is no sin in the subsequent disposal of the milk, any more than if the woman had had the little one in lawful marriage.

Hence, since there is no solid reason to believe that any sin was committed in the formation of a "breast-milk bank," a

doctor may prescribe the use of such a bank when he deems it feasible, without asking any further questions.

In former days, when a woman could not provide nourishment for her child, it was customary to seek the help of a "wet nurse," a woman who had more than sufficient milk for her own child. The principle involved was actually the same as that which is used at the present time in a more scientific way through "banks." St. Therese of Lisieux, as an infant, was enabled to survive because of the good services of a sturdy peasant woman who lived near her home in Alençon.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R.,  
S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.  
Catholic University of America.

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### NEED OF WITNESSES

All experience seems to show that we of the laity do not teach very much truth to our acquaintances. What is more remarkable is that in our failure to teach we are not aware of any failure of duty.

Why do we of the laity fail to bear witness by utterance? Almost invariably the layman would like to speak out for the truth — not to win others to accept it, (that thought hardly occurs to him), but at least to defend it against attack. Why is he silent? Usually, from a feeling that he does not know it well enough, that if he gets into an argument he will lose it. And this is probably true. But why is he not equipped for this most urgent duty? Because most Catholics see neither what the nature of the war is nor how they could help to win it.

Not to see facts so obvious means that they have not used their eyes. And it has been well said that if we do not use our eyes to see with, we will use them to weep with. The Church, we know, must triumph in the end. But in a given time and place it can be defeated. In our time and place it does not look like it is winning.

For it takes no great military expert to predict the results of a war in which large numbers of the soldiers do not fight, do not even know that there is a war on. The officers are essential, and obedience to them is essential. But an army in which only the officers fight is likely to have no spectacular success in any way, least of all in this war which the Church is waging for the souls of men. For the great mass of the people we are fighting to win never meet an officer or hear an officer's voice. They meet us. It would be too much to say that they hear our voice.

*Frank Sheed*

## FEATURE LETTER

# *The Other Side of the Picture*

**Editor's Note:** *During the past year we published several letters which bitterly criticized priests. When we published these letters we offered neither a lengthy refutation of the statements made nor a defense of priests in general; which, of course, did not at all imply that we agreed with the statements. We hoped that some members of the laity would offer to present the other side of the picture, believing that such a statement of the case would carry more weight than if it were made by a priest. We received many letters from lay people in defense of priests. The following letter has been selected as the best presentation of the case.*

\* \* \*

Dear Fathers:

Just now, in catching up on my reading, I have finished the September issue of THE LIGUORIAN. As usual there was one particular letter about priests that was appallingly bitter and sarcastic. And now I have something to say. I just have to get this off my chest. It has been building up for a long time, and this latest letter has sparked me off.

The observations and the remarks I make in this letter are all mine. I gained the information on which I base this letter while acting as a pastor's part-time secretary, as well as from knowing the priests of our parish and a number of other priests.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I have been a convert for 17 years. As a mother of eight children I have had my gripes and complaints against priests and teaching nuns. But, thank God, I have had the sense to distinguish between the human priest and the divine doctrine he teaches, and not to pass on my occasional criticisms to my children — only to my kitchen cabinet door as I did my dinner dishes.

This last letter about priests, in THE LIGUORIAN, set me to thinking of just how much unjust criticism a priest must face, and my mother's heart cringes when I think of the son I have in a minor seminary, working and praying for the "joyful" day when he will be ordained.

The letter also made me reflect a bit on a priest's life in general, and

I could only think that the writer must be very uninformed about the details involved in performing and preparing for a wedding — the instructions, the paper work, the rehearsal. It may be a weak comparison, but I don't think so, when I ask, "Would a lawyer, as a professional man, be satisfied with an offering of twenty-five dollars after having spent that much time and effort on a legal matter?"

Then my thoughts wandered to the priests who are personal friends of our family, and the problems they face as parish priests. Would you like the laywoman's view of a priest's life? *It is the hardest and most thankless of all vocations*, and the hundredfold that our Lord promised is necessary, because at times the Lord is the only friend a priest has!

The priest's day — the one I am writing about — begins at 5 a.m. He must get up at that hour in order to have the church warm for the parishioners who attend the 6 o'clock Mass and to say a few personal prayers himself. He knows that he will be holding God in his hands in a little while, and again, as on every day, he is amazed by his own unworthiness, after so much trying, and our Lord's humility in letting "just anybody" touch Him. The priest wonders, as he drags himself out of bed, before dawn during much of the year, "Is it really worth it? There will be only 15 people at the 6 o'clock Mass, out of 3,000 men, women and children in the parish." Then he remembers that our Lord faced the same situation in the Garden of Olives when He look-

ed down the ages and saw how few would cooperate fully and take complete advantage of the sacrifice He was making.

(I've often wondered if our Lord wasn't thinking, "Is it worth it?" when He said three different times, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.")

Then after Mass and his thanksgiving there's breakfast and maybe an hour or two for preparing a sermon, to do book work, to make reports to the chancery office, or to iron out details that have caused problems in the parish school. There are instructions in catechism in the classrooms, instructions for inquirers and prospective converts, salesmen to deal with or to refuse diplomatically, calls to be made on the sick of the parish in homes and in hospitals, phone calls to make and to answer. Anyway, before he knows it, the morning is gone and there's lunch — alone or with another "soured-on-life" priest (as one of your letter-writers described him).

Of course, he can have a siesta after lunch for a short while — if his parish is prosperous enough to afford a housekeeper to answer the doorbell or telephone. Even so, don't forget that Father has duties in the evening that most husbands don't have. Besides, can't you see the warm reception Father would get if he came calling at 1:30 in the afternoon when the little ones had just gone to bed for a nap, and Mom had looked forward to a half hour on the couch with her *Ladies' Home Journal*?

So then comes the afternoon when there are more private instructions, meetings, hospital calls, parish calls (3,000 is a lot of people), and on certain afternoons, confessions.

After supper, instructions for the engaged couple, and more meetings — always meetings! Monday night, Legion of Mary; Tuesday night, public high school religion classes; Wednesday night, P.T.A., Altar Society, or confraternity. Thursday night, Holy Hour; Friday night, Cub Scouts; Saturday night, confessions and preparation of announcements for the Masses on Sunday. That could get monotonous, couldn't it? And Father never has the choice of staying home if "he's tired;" he must attend.

Then bedtime. But before that, time must be found to recite his breviary — the prayers he must say each day under pain of mortal sin for the members of the Catholic Church, his bitter, sarcastic fellow members included; a bit of spiritual reading, and then some few minutes for personal devotions and prayers. After all, he must remember not to become so busy saving others that he neglects his own soul. And it's easy for a priest to be tempted at least to think unkind things when he's criticized constantly for everything from "Why doesn't the school bus stop in front of my house?" to "Would you please stop moving around that statue of St. Anthony I donated? If you don't, I'm going to take it back, because I'm sure you aren't pleased with it."

Can't we lay people put ourselves in Father's place for a bit? First of

all he must be concerned with our souls, so he exhorts us to make the sacrifice of attending occasional weekday Mass and the Holy Hour. "Well, Father has never had to fix school lunches or help with the homework!" Who ever said it wasn't a sacrifice? Father knows it is — he makes one every morning. An hour of sleep, compared to the privilege of standing at the foot of the cross!

Then he knows that the parish needs money in order to have these services, but he can't talk too much about material needs from the altar. "If there's anything disgusting, it's a 'money-priest'! Why can't he confine his begging to the bulletin?" (Do you read the bulletin?) He knows, too, that he needs help from his laymen. So he has many organizations. But the same old core — God love 'em! — are the only ones there. "I'm just too tired. My customers really gave me a hard time today. Think I'll stay home and watch the fights on TV." (Father had to leave for the meeting just as the fights started.)

Father must never be annoyed by the altar boy whose fingernails are dirty; he must never be irritated by the high-schoolers of the parish who say they'll be responsible for serving one Mass a month and then never show. He must not visit one family too much, even if they are boyhood friends, because the rest of the parish will be hurt by his "negligence." He shouldn't visit parishioners too much because he's not available at the rectory; but on the other hand he should visit a lot, for otherwise "how will

he get to know his flock?" He mustn't talk about more money needed, but he should put a sidewalk around the new school.

"Father never had a family — how can he know what living with a nagging wife is like?" He knows — he has about 600 of them.

"Father doesn't know what bringing up kids is like. How can he talk about what we should do with ours?" Well, Father knows when he meets a well-mannered child, and he recognizes an ill-bred one, too. And because he is their spiritual father, he'd like them to be reared as well as possible.

Father must never mention his disappointments in regard to individual parishioners — that's uncharitable. He mustn't eat more than two servings at a dinner out — that's gluttony. He must *never* take more than two cans of beer — that's drunkenness. And if he does err and talks a bit freely, it's scandalizing to us good Christians who have *never* been guilty of drinking more than was good for us.

Can't we realize that the word, Father, is more than just a word? Father has prepared himself for from 10 to 13 years for the work of being a father in the spiritual but true sense of the word. When he asks us to try to attend more services, he knows we will benefit more than we realize. When he asks for more money, he has no plan to buy a new set of golf clubs — he expects to build up the parish plant to be able to offer more advantages to his children. After all,

he has \$60 or \$100 per month "spending money" to buy clothes, car, Christmas presents for his mother — and raffle tickets from the school kids. When he asks for members for the organizations, he's only asking us to help him save more souls for Christ — not because he likes to go to meetings. But remember, while he is our spiritual father he is a human one.

He has his anger, his annoyances, his lack of business judgment, his stubbornness, his laziness, his natural desire for feminine companionship, too. He's just as normal as any male — and he, like all of us, is striving with all his will to overcome all his faults for the love of his God. And he, like all of us, goofs sometimes, and must start all over "amending my life." And don't we all know that a priest, because of his higher state of virginity and knowledge and consecration, will be judged much more closely than we will be? When we see a priest whose conduct disappoints us, can't we remember this and pray for him — rather than criticize?

It is certain that no professional man — in fact, no ordinary man with self-respect and ambition would do the work or live the life of a priest for a mere \$60 or \$100 a month, only for the love of a crucified Christ and "the least of these, My brethren."

It must be consoling to Father, when he's disappointed at the size of the crowd at Holy Hour, worried over the parish debt and hurt to the quick by some parishioner's sarcastic

criticism — I say it must be consoling to him to know that a merciful and all-knowing God, and not a thoughtless fellow human being, will judge him, his merits and his right to heaven.

And so I go on praying that my son will persevere in his studies for the priesthood and that God will give him the grace to stand up under such persecution. He will remember that our Lord called priests "not servants, but friends;" and that He also warned them that they would be persecuted, for "the servant is not above the Master." And when a priest gets to be a bishop — dear heaven! — God must consider him a saint already, if He judges him to be able to stand up under the criticism of 100,000 people.

May I suggest that all lay people make it a point to make the acquaintance of a priest or two, if they can do so? They will find, as we have, that they will benefit intellectually and spiritually. Most of all, however, they will have more compassion for a fellow human being who is trying to save souls for Christ. Remember he is undertaking a superhuman task, not out of ambition or vainglory, but because he remembers that our Lord said, "You have not chosen Me; I have chosen you."

God bless priests and their work, and may they all have the front seats in heaven, as they do in the cathedral at the ordination ceremony!

San Antonio, Texas      Mrs. D. U.

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#### PEACE OF MIND

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (St. John 14:27)

How do you know when you have that kind of peace? When you have it, you are natural and relaxed, not tense with the fear of what others will think or say or do. When you have it, you have poise and self-control, and you are not swept into regrettable speech and action by the gusts of undisciplined impulse. When you have it, you are serene and certain, not disturbed by negative thoughts and emotions.

How can you get that kind of peace? You can get it by being sure of what you believe, by disciplining yourself in the way of life you have chosen as best. You can get it by filling your consciousness with thoughts of the good, the true, the beautiful, and by expressing only love and good will. You can get it by surrendering yourself to God and accepting His guidance in all things.

*Franciscan Message*

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If a man holds his nose to the grindstone for 40 or 50 years, his children often start turning theirs up.

*Texas Outlook*



# *Problems of Single People*



## FEARS ABOUT OLD AGE

*Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.*

ONE of the things that contribute to a sense of insecurity among those who have remained single in the world, which is intensified at times by the foolish remarks of married relatives and friends, is worry about the future loneliness and helplessness of old age. "Who will take care of you when you are old?" some foolish married brother or sister or friend will often say to a single person. If it be a single woman to whom the words are addressed, she will often start brooding about the matter. She may have no interest in or desire for a husband in the present, but the thought of the distant and possibly helpless future without someone to care for her may make for a gloomy and melancholy, even possibly a kind of frantic, outlook on life.

It is most unrealistic to permit fears of the unknown and completely unpredictable future to destroy our peace of mind in the present. More than that, there are many things that a single person can do to provide against an unbearably difficult old age.

Even though we are not referring primarily to worries over one's financial security in the future, these do have a place in the general outlook of any individual. They should, however, be greatly lessened today with the foreseeable benefits of social security, and through

prudent investment in insurance and annuities that are available to almost everybody who has even a modest income.

Sometimes, however, worry over the possible material needs of the distant future makes something of misers out of single people. They fall into the obsession that they can never have enough for their old age, and scrimp and save and deprive themselves and harden their hearts against charity to an extent that makes their lives more miserable than even a poverty-stricken old age could ever be. The sad truth is that in so many of these cases the saving was all in vain because God calls them, when their time comes, in such a way that their extraordinary savings become no help or comfort to them at all.

In the majority of cases, however, the worry about the future centers about the vague fear that there may be no close and beloved companionship to comfort one in old age and in death.

Even this, however, is in many respects an unrealistic fear. It seems that almost every individual in the world, in no matter what walk of life, is inclined to the conviction that his old age is going to be a long and difficult one. This is contrary to a fact that is known, that three out of five people die suddenly, at least in the sense that they die when they expected that they would still have many years to live.



Even for those who will be chosen by God to spend many years waiting, in old age, for His call, there is a way of making sure that they will not be without comfort and love in their declining years. That is the way of genuine love and sacrifice for others through their active years.

No one dies alone and friendless who has not chosen to do so by resisting friendship, by withdrawing into herself, by making no sacrifices in behalf of others during the years of health and vigor and activity. It is even possible for the unmarried to have far more friends than the married, and to receive more comfort and love from those friends than a husband or wife might receive from their immediate family in time of need. In all cases, however, it is necessary for everyone to be deeply aware of the fact that

in this life love can never be perfect; the love of others never answers all our needs; some sense of loneliness and even abandonment will be the lot of every soul, even one with the most intimate family relationships, in the weakness and suffering of old age. But what comfort and help others can give, friends can give in as great a measure as an immediate family, if those friends have been truly loved and helped when love could be more easily given than received.

For these reasons, "fear of a lonely old age" is more a bugaboo for the single than a solidly founded fear. It can be all but completely destroyed by confidence in God's goodness, by reasonable prudence in looking ahead, and above all, by deeds of charity, friendship and compassion for others, each one of which will bring a return of a hundredfold.

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### THE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD

We wanted to outline for you the ideal of womanhood as faith presents it; you find it in Mary and it can be explained by the intimacy of the bonds which united her to Christ. In the conduct of your personal life and in the exercise of your apostolate, never lose sight of her example. Let it inspire your words, your attitudes, and your efforts in your work of emphasizing the dignity of woman and the nobility of her mission.

However, it is not enough simply to know Mary and her greatness. One must also draw closer to her and live in the light of her presence. It would be almost a contradiction if a Catholic woman working in the apostolate did not foster fervent devotion for the mother of God. Devotion to Mary will make possible in you a better understanding of Christ and a more intense union with His mysteries. You will receive Christ from the arms of His Mother and she will permit you to love and imitate Him. Pray to her that she might give you the strength to follow Him to the end with faith and ardent love! Pray to her that she might help you to lead today's women along the road that leads to Him!

*The Pope Speaks*

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When God measures a man, He puts the tape around the heart instead of the head.

# SIDEGLANCES

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## By the Bystander

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## Worries about Supporting Future Children

FROM a rather unusual source our correspondence has brought us a straightforward statement of the kind of objection that a great many parents raise against having children. It boils down to this question, that such parents ask: "How will we ever be able to raise and educate them?" The unusual source of which we speak is a letter from two single Catholic sailors, writing to us from a ship somewhere in the Atlantic, who on board their ship have access to THE LIGUORIAN. This is what they say:

"We especially commend you for your column, *Readers Retort*, which we feel is good not only for Catholics but also for non-Catholics because it gives them an insight into the problems of their fellow men and just what they do not do to solve their own problems. To our knowledge quite a few non-Catholics have read, enjoyed and argued with us over various points in your magazine.

"Now the real reason for this letter. Although you quite beautifully handled the religious side of birth-control, to our estimate you completely failed to answer the economic and social aspect of this

problem, and this has been brought up to us again and again by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. As one of your readers wrote, the Church does not help financially in these matters, nor do Catholics expect it. But on the other hand, how can people bring into the world new souls when they rightly know they would never be able to raise them properly nor to educate them as Catholics (due to the high cost of a Catholic education)? It's fine to say, trust in God, but when the cupboard is bare, faith and trust are at a minimum, as is the case with many families today. To expect people to stop using their marriage rights if they cannot afford to have children is not to our thinking the correct solution. We do not advocate birth-control as it is preached today, but surely the Church has some other answer besides prayer and abstinence for these 'brow-beaten Catholics.' We hope in future LIGUORIANS to see a more clear and explicit answer to what seems to be an ever increasing problem in our Catholic faith. Neither of us is married, but we have heard this question raised in our own families, and have seen

the mental and social damage done to young couples who want to be good Catholics but cannot accept the teaching of the Church on birth-control. These are the people the clergy have got to help."

This very moderate statement of a problem ties in with many much less moderate statements that we receive. For example, here is a quote from another letter: "From talking with many of the priests I know, I have learned that their attitude toward birth-control is that it is wrong, period. They give no sign whatsoever of understanding the difficulties entailed in abstinence, but seem to have the idea that the mere declaration of what is right and wrong wholly answers the problem. I would say that this attitude of 'white and black' drives more people from the Church than any other reason. Don't misunderstand me. I fully grasp that priests cannot condone sin. What I am saying is that the clergy not only fail, but do not even try to understand the layman's outlook on this problem."

**I**N commenting on such criticisms, we do not intend to deny that perhaps we ourselves, as well as other priests, have at times been guilty of a bluntness in answering married people's questions about the morality of birth-control that left them with the impression that we had no feeling for or understanding of their problem. Even here, however, it must be said that very often the bluntness

is read into a priest's words by the hearer for the simple reason that he wants to hear only one thing from the priest, and that is an approval of the practice of birth-control. A wife or husband may come to a priest (this has often happened to us) with a most tragic story as to why they cannot or should not have any more children, and why they must practice contraception. The priest begins his answer, as he must, with the statement that contraception cannot be the answer to any problem because it is a violation of the natural and eternal law of God. Then he may talk for half an hour trying to probe the case, trying to find some other solution for the harried couple than birth-prevention. All his words fall on deaf ears. He is accused of lack of understanding for one sole reason, that he did not say that contraception would be O. K. Moreover, too few people realize that one of the most terrible sins a priest can commit is that of cooperating, by advice or approval, in the sins of impurity of someone else.

Let's go back to the statement of the problem contained in the first letter quoted here. The nub of the matter is in these words: "How can people bring into the world new souls when they rightly know they would never be able to raise them properly, nor educate them as Catholics (due to the high cost of a Catholic education)?" And the words, "surely there is some other answer besides prayer

and abstinence." Do the Catholic clergy have any understanding of these problems of married people?

Again admitting shortcomings of approach in actual interviews, we can maintain that most priests have more understanding of the problems than they are given credit for.

First of all, take the actual case of a couple coming to a priest with the statement, "We cannot have any more children because it will be impossible for us to raise them properly." At once it becomes the priest's job to probe a bit into the prophecy the couple is making about its future: "It will be impossible to raise any more children properly." Perhaps he will find that, for the time being, the couple is in a pretty hopeless economic state. The husband is chronically ill and unable to earn a good living. Debts have piled up. There is nobody to help the family. In this case the priest will certainly tell them that they have more than adequate reason for practicing rhythm, and in most cases will even send them to a good Catholic physician who will work out the details of the system for them. But he will be sure to add that even for this practice they need special graces, and must therefore be sure to receive Holy Communion often and take up a firm schedule of daily prayer.

Just as often, however, the priest will learn on questioning that there is little solid ground for the

black prophecy that the future holds no hope of their raising children as yet unborn in a proper manner. Actually, the couple suffers from one of two things, either a morbid fear that four or five years later there may be a great depression, or from the American heresy that, if you cannot give a child the very best of everything in a material sense, you are not raising it properly. It must be remembered that every priest with any experience has seen countless examples of married couples with moderate or fairly low regular incomes who have raised large families and educated all their children in such a way as to make them a credit and a blessing to their parents, their Church, their community and their nation. Such a priest is hardly speaking without understanding when he questions the grounds on which other couples make the blanket prophecy: "We will not be able to raise any more children properly." It is true that prudence must always be united to trust in God; but reason and faith do not make it an essential part of prudence to worry needlessly about the unknowable and unforeseeable future that is yet five or ten years away. If in the present, "the cupboard is bare" and the debts are deep, then prudence suggests and recommends rhythm until the situation betters. If the cupboard is fairly full today, there is no good reason for renouncing fertility on the nebulous ground that someday the cupboard might be bare.

THE understanding of the Church in these matters, and of priests who speak for her, goes much farther than trying to take care of each acute case as it arises. Our correspondents ask: What does the Church or the clergy do to meet the social and economic crises that arise in the lives of married people, often making birth-prevention very attractive? The long range program to which every priest contributes consists of three parts.

First, it is the wise advice and constant urging of the Church that couples should not decide to marry until the husband-to-be has a steady income assured which is, at least in a modest sense, sufficient for the needs of a family. If a kid of seventeen, just out of high school, holding down his first job at \$40 a week, comes to a priest and wants to marry a certain girl, the priest's first words will usually be: "How can you expect to support this girl, and the children that will almost surely come along, on so meagre a salary? Why don't you wait until you improve your income?" He cannot stop the couple from marrying, if the parents consent. If the youngsters insist, he has to arrange for the wedding, no matter how reluctantly. Deep in his heart, however, he knows that this is the kind of couple that will be coming around later with the demand: "You must approve of our practicing contraception."

Second, the program goes farther than advising against marri-

age when a couple of teen-agers who have already fallen in love and determined to get married appear. The Church and her spokesmen warn teen-agers against keeping steady company when they know they won't be able to support a family for several years. The logic of this warning is simple. Middle teen-agers who keep steady company almost inevitably fall in love. Once in love they have a terrifically strong urge to indulge their passions with each other. Sometimes they cheat and do so contrary to God's command. But whether they do or don't indulge themselves, they know that the only sanction for indulging their bodies is marriage. They don't think of how they are going to live or support the children God will send them. They think only of their love for each other, and the first fruit of such love which is passion. Blind to everything else, they ballyrag their parents for permission and insist that the priest speed up their wedding. Only later do they realize their folly.

Third, the Church tries, against almost invincible odds, to preserve married Catholics from the disease of secularism or materialism, which may be defined as the desire to get the very best out of this world even at the expense of the eternal happiness of the next world. It is not always the married couples of inadequately low income brackets who try to make out a case for birth-prevention on eco-

nomic grounds. It is often those who look upon birth-prevention as a necessary means to moving constantly upward in the social and economic realm; those who cannot think of education for their children except in the sense of the most expensive schools; those who think that a child without every material advantage and convenience is a neglected child. Materialism is a disease that hardens the heart and paralyzes the will. But the Church keeps battling against it. She has thousands of happy, successful families to point to who made do with moderate incomes enhanced by a great love of God.

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Let's conclude by giving a direct answer to the question posed to us by the two sailors. "How can people bring into the world new souls when they rightly know that they could not possibly raise or educate them properly?" Here is the answer: If they married prudently, that is, with a prospect of a moderate and steady income, and if they are free from the fever known as the blind desire to keep up with the better-off Joneses, and if they keep God on their side by unfailing loyalty to His will, they can never *rightly know* that they won't be able to raise future children properly. They can't even know whether they will have any future children. If an unexpected setback overtakes them, despite their prudence, the Church will have wise advice to give them if they humbly seek it.

February, 1959

One more word: It is not true to say that the Church never helps anybody financially. In a limited pastoral experience, we know of scores of families who have been helped economically, through priests and organizations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, when unforeseen catastrophes have befallen them. There is only one thing the Catholic Church or any priest cannot do, and that is to tell any married couple that in their case contraception is lawful.

#### MASTERPIECE

The children in a school of the town of Harrow, in England, were told by their teacher, a Dominican nun, to write about anything they saw in the class room. Since it was a Catholic school, there was a crucifix on the wall, and one little girl of six years chose this for her subject.

The result was this masterpiece of meditation, which she shyly handed to the teacher:

"Look! there is a cross;  
And Jesus is nailed to the cross.  
And He was hurt.  
And He was sad.

But He knew He was to be nailed  
to the cross,  
He did not mind.  
He was to be nailed to the cross,  
But He knew He was to be nailed  
to the cross,  
But He loved us so much  
He had to be nailed to the cross."

•

No one ever got drafted into the army of sinners. It is filled by volunteers.

*Fore and Aft*

# Code of Catholic Conduct

*Donald J. Corrigan, C.S.S.R.*

## Working Together for the Parish

**I**N THE early centuries the pagans used to say of the Christians "See how they love one another." It is to be feared that modern pagans might not be able to say the same of Catholics in many parishes today.

The parish, like the good Christian home, should be a little bit of heaven here on earth, made so by charity, where there should be no refusal to serve, no seeking of self, no distinction of class, race or color, no jealous factions, no damaging cliques, no stubborn pride, no hatred.

Working together in a parish means nothing more than putting into practice our holy religion, loving all with a love like Christ's in the wondrous Mystical Body of which He is the head and we are the members, giving all to the work because the work is Christ's.

Thus the Catholic girl who says, "I won't join the Young Ladies' Sodality as long as so-and-so is president," is not being true to her Catholic ideals. The man who refuses to attend Holy Name Communions and breakfasts because there are too many present from "across the tracks," or the lady who refuses to help at the bazaar because she has not been "recognized," is hardly displaying the humility of the humble Christ.

Happy is that pastor and parish whose people truly love one another with a charity that knows only the generosity of the Saviour. They will truly work together.

### SUPPORT YOUR PARISH!

**M**OST pastors do not find it pleasant or easy to talk about money for their parish needs. They were ordained to minister to people spiritually, but in many cases circumstances have forced them to become builders, property administrators and financial wizards. Many a good pastor has wound up with his health ruined and his nerves shattered under the constant burden of a parish debt or the taxing responsibility of maintaining a parish plant. No one but the pastor does much worrying about these problems.

There is a precept of the Church which commands all Catholics to help support their pastor, parish church and school. The law does not state how much each one should contribute. We do know that in the old Jewish law, under the direct command of God, people were told to give tithes, that is, one tenth of their income, to the support of the temple. You never hear such a figure mentioned today, except among some devout Protestant groups, where the Old Testament norm is still accepted.

The amount of each Catholic's contribution to his church is left to his own conscience and judgment. This much is certain, that if each member of any parish would do his share, according to his means, there would be little cause for financial worry on the part of the pastor in regard to keeping the parish alive.



In the matter of supporting your parish, it is of the utmost importance that you use the system that is in vogue in your parish. Don't be among the few in every parish who insist on the right to support the church in their own way—forming the opposition party against the system that has been adopted.

If Sunday envelopes are the ordinary means of contributing to church support, *use the envelopes*, and see to it that yours is handed in every Sunday. If adverse circumstances make it impossible for you to contribute anything at certain times, do not be afraid or ashamed to tell your pastor just that; he will deeply appreciate the willingness and interest that will be evident in your coming to him and telling him about your difficulty. In most cases, he will be able to help you in some way to get over the rough spot.

#### GIVING TO GOD

It is good to remember that your contributions directly provide for the maintenance and improvement of your parish and can truly be called "giving to God." The salaries of pastors and assistant priests are fixed and very small, as salaries of professional men go, and you should flatly contradict anyone who suggests that contributions to your parish go to make your pastor rich.

Most parishes need the help of special drives, card parties, social affairs, and

the like, not only to make improvements, but just to maintain parochial property and activities.

Take the parochial school as an example. Small as the sisters' salaries are, they are seldom more than covered by whatever tuition is charged. Besides that, there is the cost of light, heat, janitor's service, etc. A good parishioner recognizes these needs and is always ready to do his share in any fund-raising drive. He is never among those who complain that "the priest talks too much about money," even though the subject may have to be brought up quite often. He knows that if he is doing his share, the talk about money is not meant for him; if he is not doing his share, the talk is a needed reminder for him to get busy.

It is customary, and sanctioned by Church law, that parishioners make a donation to the parish priest at baptisms, weddings and funerals. In many dioceses the amount is more or less fixed by statute or custom. However, a person who is poor has a full right to the services of his priests on these occasions and on other occasions, even though he is unable to make an offering of any kind. It is to the poor that every priest, like his divine Master, is especially sent, and no priest would expect or accept an offering from these favorites of our Lord.

#### IS YOUR RELIGION SHOWING?

When those around us disagree or ridicule or even persecute us because of our religion, we have been living with our Catholicism showing as Christ commanded us . . . for non-Catholics measure Catholicism by Catholics. We may be devout in our churches, but they are not there to see. We may eat fish on Fridays but they are seldom at the table with us. When we relegate religion to a marked-off part of our lives, instead of letting it overflow into every hour of the day, we are no longer Christ-bearers but Christ-hiders.

*E. Egan*

# KATIE

*What did Katie have in this great world of ours to make her such a treasure? She had nothing she could lose. She had only God.*

JOSEPH ADAMEC, C.S.S.R.

KATIE is old. She is bent. She wears a black coat and a broad-rimmed hat. Katie is a member of our parish on the East Side of New York City.

To begin with, Katie used to have me gnashing my teeth. Whenever I was preaching a sermon, whether in English or Czech, Katie would be sure to come into church after I started my sermon. She would start down the middle aisle, looking from side to side for a place to sit. About one third of the way down the aisle she would stop, turn around, and look at the clock in the back of the church. Time did not mean much to Katie, and she did not have a clock that could keep the correct time. After getting the time of day, Katie would again proceed down the aisle, still looking from side to side for a place. Why she was searching that way I will never know, because I knew from the moment she came on the scene that Katie would end up in the very first bench, right under the pulpit. And she always did. Immediately after locating herself she would be

caught with a fit of coughing which I knew would end when my sermon ended. And so I used to fume inwardly during my sermon.

But then I did not know Katie very well at all. As time went on I got to know Katie better. As I got to know her better, I got to love her more. Katie was always smiling or laughing.

Every Tuesday when we had devotions to the Infant Jesus of Prague at the shrine in our lower church, Katie would plant herself by the door and sell chances to help the church.

I used to say to her, "Katie, at least give the people a chance to get out of the church."

Katie would laugh and move a few inches, but in a minute she was right back at the door like a cork. But the people did not mind Katie. They liked her. They would buy a chance from her, or just stop for a pleasant word. And I learned that you could not know Katie without liking her.

Then Katie was missing for a few days. One evening a neighbor interrupted my Legion of Mary meeting to tell me that Katie was very sick. After the meeting I walked the ten blocks from our church on 61st Street to Katie's place on 71st Street. How many, many times Katie walked these ten blocks to church in spite of her 76 years!

The houses on 71st Street were called "the barracks." Katie had a "penthouse apartment." I climbed the five long flights of sixty-nine stone stairs between narrow, cold walls. I knocked, and a neighbor let me into Katie's two-room, coldwater "suite."

I had the sacred oils in my pocket in case Katie needed anointing, which I was quite sure she did not. I found Katie sick but not dying. She was smiling as usual. But Katie was sick. Her legs were large and swollen. On one of them she had a large ulcer. Katie was always thin, but now she looked as if she were wearing a rubber tire around her waist. She could not lie down because she would feel as if she were choking.

The problem now was to convince Katie that she should go to a hospital. This was something new for Katie. In seventy-six years she had never been in a hospital. I don't know if she ever visited a doctor. I do know that whenever she had a cold she would inhale pepper. But it did not take me long to convince Katie to go to the hospital. I told her it was God's will and that was that. I arranged to bring her Holy Communion in the morning, and then we would have an ambulance come for her.

A few days later I took the Second Avenue bus to 28th Street and Bellevue Hospital, that tremendous city hospital that looms over the East River. I made my way through the many corridors and courtyards of Bellevue till I reached Ward 5B.

At the door of the vast ward I asked one of the nurses where Katie was. But before the nurse could answer I heard, "Father, Father!" coming across the ward. There was Katie waving to me with all her might. She was all shined up and her smile seemed bigger than ever. Over her legs she had a big bird-cage to keep the blankets off them.

It did not take me long to find out that the nurses and doctors were wild about Katie. In a few minutes several doctors were gathered around the bed with me. They were pleased with Katie's progress. In two days her legs were almost normal again, and the rubber tire was gone. And, thank God, even her cough was gone. But more than that, the doctors were pleased with Katie herself.

"She's wonderful, Father," the doctor in charge said. "I've never seen anything like it. She's in such great spirits in spite of her sufferings." The doctor was not talking about Katie as just another case. You could tell he was talking about a friend — a friend who was making him happy by just being there in the ward.

Before I left the ward this doctor said something to me which no doctor had ever said to me before. He thanked *me* for visiting Katie. You would think I was the parish priest visiting his mother.

I was so proud to be Katie's friend that day. Some people can boast of knowing motion picture celebrities and Wall Street vice-presidents. But in Ward 5B of Bellevue I could boast that Katie was a friend of mine.

On my way out of Bellevue I lost my way in the maze of corridors as I usually do. But this time I had many things on my mind. Were the doctors and nurses of Bellevue helping Katie as much as she was helping them? Was I helping Katie by my visit, or was Katie helping me? And what did Katie have in this great world of ours to make her such a treasure? Nothing. Nothing except God. And that was everything; and Katie knew it. That was what made her so happy. That was why she could make everybody around her happy. Katie could say in absolute truth, "My God and my All." She had nothing she could lose. She had only God; and nothing — sickness, suffering, even death — could take God away from her.

As I stepped out the great doorway of Bellevue, I caught myself praying,

"Dear God, when I'm sick, make me like Katie."

I've visited Katie since that day, and now she is just about on her way home from Bellevue. She will bring with her Mass cards, and "get well" cards sent her by people who knew her, but who never knew her name till I mentioned her from the altar. She's coming back — all eighty-five pounds of her, and it should not be long before she is back on her feet again, and stepping off those ten blocks back to our church.

I and a lot of other people are waiting to see Katie blocking the door of the church with a chance book again. I can hardly wait to see her come into church after I have started my sermon and make her way down the aisle looking from side to side, turn to look at the clock, and finally settle down in the first bench. I don't know what I will be preaching about that day. But I know that in my heart I will say, "Katie, it's good to have you back."

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#### CEASE THE JOSTLING!

We've just been told about a class of 10-year-olds who had been instructed by their teacher to write a story on some category of cleanliness and health. One little fellow's treatise—labeled "Care of the Teeth"—listed in order:

- (1) See your dentist often.
- (2) Brush your teeth every morning and night.
- (3) Watch out for shovers at the drinking fountain.

*American Weekly*

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#### COMPLICATIONS

Recently a non-Catholic who is seriously thinking of the Church asked a convert:

"Did becoming a Catholic stop your sinning?"

"No," she replied, "but it complicated it considerably."

# ? ? ? Readers Ask... ? ? ?

## Too Much Authority?

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

**P**ROBLEM: Suppose you have a pastor who quite obviously is not paying attention to his job the way he should. In many Protestant churches the people could simply get together and, if enough of them agreed, quickly bring about the departure of that pastor from the scene. In the case of Catholics, however, there is no such freedom. A pastor who is extremely negligent or perhaps incapacitated by age can nevertheless stay in office for years. Doesn't this seem unfair?

**A**NSWER: In answering this difficulty, we might start with a sound principle which should commend itself to all. The principle is this: God has a right to command; human beings have an obligation to obey. There are different ways in which God can make His will known to us; different ways in which he can extend His authority. He can wield His authority directly, or He can do so by the voice and presence of a human creature, just as He made use of Moses long ago as His representative. Surely it is our first duty to examine the evidence as to God's intention.

Now the Gospels make it abundantly clear that our Lord, in founding His Church, was establishing a structure based on both divine and human authority. He says to St. Peter: "Upon you I will build My Church." The keys of the kingdom of heaven, which He promises to Peter, are certainly a symbol of the authority which Peter was to exercise in the name of Christ. "Whatever you bind on earth," He tells the apostles, "will be bound in heav-

en." And He adds: "He who hears you, hears Me; he who rejects you, rejects Me."

Christ could have, of course, established His Church in any way that He pleased. He could have set up a kind of democracy in which the faithful would vote for their leaders. But you find no trace of this in His teaching. Rather it seems clear that in His intention, when authority was bestowed officially on a priest, bishop or pope, that authority could not be "voted away" by the people.

Our Lord must have clearly foreseen that, human nature being what it is, there would be abuses of authority as time went on. After all, He gave Judas the authority of an apostle, and then was betrayed by him. The Church does not condone the sins or faults of those in authority; in extreme cases, she will take steps to remove an offender from some particular office. But she does not believe that this authority is subject to the whims of the people. Authority must remain firm. Where there is no such firm spiritual authority, you have the mournful process of splintering and splitting which goes on constantly in some of the Protestant churches, and which has resulted in some 300 Christian denominations.

Those in positions of authority will be judged by God very strictly on how they have fulfilled their office. Nevertheless, the human weaknesses that appear among them from time to time are permitted by God as part of the test of obedience every Christian must undergo to prove his loyalty to God.

# Patrons for the

## Month of

## FEBRUARY

J. FITZPATRICK, C.SS.R.

**A**T THE head of our gathering of patron saints for this month we place the gentle and long-suffering St. Agatha, whose feastday is celebrated on February 5.

St. Agatha suffered martyrdom for the faith in the early centuries of the Christian era. The exact date is unknown, and a number of legends have grown up around her. Because of the brutal circumstances of her martyrdom, she soon became a great favorite of the people. In the middle ages she was the patroness of such diverse groups as bell makers, jewelers and nursing women. At the same time her intercession was invoked against fire, earthquake, thunderstorms and famine.

St. Agatha lived and died in Sicily, and it was there that she suffered her torments for the faith. Knowing that she was a Christian virgin, the magistrate first tried to corrupt her, by confining her in a house of ill fame. But the power of God protected and saved her. The judge then ordered her to be beaten and cast into prison, from which she was soon taken, stretched on the rack, torn with sharp iron hooks, and burned with fiery torches. The judge, enraged at seeing how stalwartly and prayerfully she bore all this pain, then ordered her breasts to be cruelly crushed and cut off. Cast into her cell in a dying condition, she was consoled by a vision of St. Peter, who healed her wounds. Her final torment was to be rolled naked over live coals mixed with sharp stones, and after this, with a final prayer commending herself to God, she breathed forth her pure soul.

Since she died by fire, one can readily see how people should begin to invoke her aid against fire, and in view of her cruel mutilation, one can understand her care for nursing mothers. But all young women, surely, can invoke her aid that they might remain stalwart and strong against all attempts to corrupt their ideals or weaken their faith.

Other patrons of the month:

February 1: St. Severus of Ravenna, patron of hatters. Lily Dache' and competitors take note! Perhaps this saint can gain for you a certain needed simplicity and grace in the millinery department.

February 2: St. Blase, bishop and martyr, patron of doctors, of medicine, of candlemakers and against diseases of the throat. Some people seem to regard the St. Blase blessing more important than Sunday Mass; he pities these folk even while he blesses them.

February 6: St. Dorothy, virgin and martyr. The legend states that at her place of execution an angel appeared with a basket containing apples and roses. Gardéners and florists may properly invoke her aid.

February 9: St. Apollonia, who was martyred for the faith in Alexandria about the middle of the third century. She is the patroness of dentists, and is invoked against toothache and all dental diseases. None surely will dispute her claim when they know that this aged deaconess was hit in the mouth with heavy clubs until all her teeth were broken or knocked out. This special and terrible pain was completed by her being burned alive. In the middle ages the simple and literal-minded faithful pictured St. Apollonia with a pair of pincers holding a tooth.

February 11: Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness of the sick, and rightly so, since at her famous place of pilgrimage so many have been healed.

February 12: St. Julian, hospitaler.

This saint and his wife conducted a hospital in which they cared for the sick and for weary travellers. He was a very popular patron in the middle ages, being invoked by innkeepers, circus people, hospital managers and by the poor in general.

February 14: St. Valentine, martyr. This saint does not need much of an introduction. He is the patron of lovers, of newlyweds, of greetings and, strangely enough, he is invoked against epilepsy. As to how he got his reputation for looking benignly on young lovers, this does not stem from any known event in his life. Rather, it stems from the fact that, in medieval popular belief, the birds began to pair on St. Valentine's day. St. Valentine in heaven, we daresay, is just a little puzzled at the romantic to-do which has sprung up around his name and feast.

Here are a few additional patrons against some rather common physical ailments:

St. Ignatius, February 1, against skin infections; St. Wulfhold, February 1, against gallstones; St. Wilfrid, February 15, against kidney diseases; St. Maurus, February 15, against hoarseness; St. Conrad of Piacenza, February 19, against hernia and rupture; St. Peter Damian, February 23, against headaches.

As to whether these various saints had these various ailments in the order named, you will have to wait until you get to heaven to ask them.





# readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

## Confirmation of Infants

There is one point that I feel has been neglected in several recent articles concerning the death of children and babies. Most of my "cradle Catholic" friends were quite startled to hear that our son (21 months old when he died of leukemia) was confirmed. They just did not know that such a thing was possible under any circumstances. Fortunately, I had a wonderful instructor when I became a Catholic, and I remembered his words on the subject. Consequently our little one had one sacrament more that so many must do without through the lack of information on the part of the parents. Perhaps a word or two from you about what can be done for a child in case of impending death would give some of these children the opportunity to receive this sacrament. South St. Paul, Minn. Mrs. F. A. B.

• *We did refer to this matter in our October issue, page 7, although no special mention was made of infants in danger of death. We said, "If any member of your family who has not received the sacrament of confirmation is in danger of death from sickness, accident or old age, let your pastor know about this, so that he can provide for the administration of the sacrament of confirmation." We now add specifically that the words, "any member of your family," include infants.*

The editors

## Correction!

In reference to your column *Readers Ask* in the November issue, I would like to register a mild complaint. You say: "It was indeed somewhat unfair for us to put epilepsy on a par with alcoholism, as if it were a vice or a stigma." I contend that in writing thus you were unfair (I hope unintentionally) in characterizing alcoholism as a vice or a stigma. There is a difference between alcoholism and drunkenness. A drunk wants to be drunk. Alcoholics, on the other hand, may have stopped drinking, but they are still victims of the disease of alcoholism. This has been borne out by studies in some of our large universities, and it is accepted as such by our largest industries and companies. The Blue Cross Hospital Plan recognizes it as a disease when, for example, a new member in Alcoholics Anonymous needs to be hospitalized. A drunk kids himself into thinking he can stop drinking any time he wants. A member of Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes that he cannot do so without help. We have a disease which, by the grace of God, we have been able to arrest, never entirely eliminate. I have been a daily communicant for years, and this has made me increasingly dependent on God's help. My biggest trouble before was not being able to understand why I couldn't stop with prayer and the help of God. I know

now that God gave me that help when He let me find Alcoholics Anonymous. New Jersey

N. N.

• Certainly we intended no criticism of that wonderful organization, Alcoholics Anonymous, in our remarks on epilepsy. The distinction made by this correspondent between "drunk" and "alcoholic" is necessary for anyone having to deal with this difficult problem.

The editors

### Majority Voted Yes!

I take great issue with LIGUORIAN for the article, *The Most Common Sin of Impurity*. There can be many evil effects of such an article: a suspicious parent, a youth turning more into himself, etc., to say nothing of the greatest evil effect: a certain odiousness for the seal of confession. The "top billing" on the front cover, the first page position of the article and the "do not read this article," advice are all out of place. If this magazine is in its rightful place in the Catholic home (on the coffee table), I am sure all from seven to seventy read the article. You are making LIGUORIAN sensational and like the army sergeant — and its readers like the common troop. The Church has never needed this kind of thing and will continue not to need it. From one who works very close to teenagers — a most imprudent article!

N. N.

Father L.

Congratulations to the editors of LIGUORIAN for having the courage to publish *The Most Common Sin of Impurity* and to the author for a fine article. His article is practical and comprehensive. Canada

Father F.

I liked your article, *The Most Common Sin of Impurity*. It is an excellent article, well written and masterfully presented. Occasionally one of the students

will approach me, a lay teacher, and ask advice. Most of them will be satisfied with my suggestion that they talk to a priest, but a few "can't get themselves to see Father." I know this sounds silly in the eyes of an adult, but all we have to do is look back at our own youth. Your article is superb for trying to help this type of youth. It is also enlightening for us, since I believe it will help us to be of assistance to others by its handling of the problem in a positive way.

N. N.

Mr. L. R.

Thank you for your article in the November issue on *The Most Common Sin of Impurity*! I am one of the persons whom you mentioned in the beginning of your article as having written to you requesting such an article — anonymously, of course. Now I want to thank you for this article, and somehow I feel brave enough to sign my name. Not that my name really matters, because there must be just as many people suffering from this sin as from the other more-preached-about sins of impurity.

New Jersey

N. N.

The article, *The Most Common Sin of Impurity*, was excellently written. It is something that needed to be said and I sincerely hope your readers accepted it in the spirit in which it was given. For an added guide I would suggest *The Difficult Commandment* by Father Martin-dale, a small classic that can be purchased at Catholic book stores for fifty cents.

Woodside, New York

J. T.

Enclosed is a copy of the reprint of the article on *The Most Common Sin of Impurity*, which we made with your permission for distribution to the young men at our college. Our retreat for the students begins this coming Monday. I do

feel that the article will be a fine contribution to the spiritual reading of our boys.

New York, N. Y.

Brother C. L.

### Science and Religion

I was very much interested in your article entitled, *How Scientific Is True Religion?* I showed the article to a non-Catholic friend, who is well-versed in his religion and a graduate of a scientific course, to get his reaction. He answered that exact sciences are the physical sciences in which one arrives at the same result when an experiment is carried on under the same conditions. Inexact sciences are economics, history, sociology, etc., in which you have to take into consideration the acts of human beings, who react in various ways, so that the best you can do is to say that, considering the circumstances and our previous experience it is probable that certain things will happen. He felt sure that any science that could apply to religion would not fit into even the inexact category, and that Christians accept the Gospels in accordance with the decision of the Church that they were inspired by God and do not expect a scientific proof.

Bay Shore, N. Y.

W. J. G.

• *The graduate of a scientific course whose remarks are incorporated in the above letter needs a lesson in fundamental (or scientific!) thinking. He does not go far enough in classifying sciences. Let us complete the classification for him. Sciences may be divided into physical and metaphysical sciences. The physical sciences deal with matters subject to the observation of the senses. These are rightly divided into exact and inexact sciences. Metaphysical sciences are concerned with truths that are beyond grasp of the senses—subject only to the cognitive power of the intellect. Philosophy is a metaphysical science, in that it deals with the ultimate*

*causes of things not observable by the senses alone. Religion and theology are metaphysical sciences in that they give one the truth about God and human destiny, which are beyond the capacity of the senses to grasp. Philosophy and theology can be more exact than the most exact physical science. For example, the philosophical principle, "A thing cannot BE and NOT BE at the same time," is more certain than the observable law of gravity. So, too, with truths about the existence, nature, revelation of God. One can acquire greater metaphysical certainty about these truths than about anything else. One would never accept the decision of the Church about the divine inspiration of the Gospels unless one had certain and scientific reasons for accepting the decision of the Church.*

The editors

### St. Elizabeth's Daughter

The article on Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in the November issue was excellent. I thought you might be interested to know that one of St. Elizabeth's daughters, Gertrude, has herself been beatified by the Church. This Gertrude was consecrated to God in her very early childhood by her sainted mother and noble father. She became a Norbertine nun in the Abbey of Aldenburg while still a girl, and it is said that after St. Elizabeth died she appeared to Gertrude in her convent cell several times. Outstanding for her great love of God and fidelity to the Holy Rule, Gertrude was elected abbess of her monastery in her early twenties. She died in the year 1297, at the then very remarkable old age of seventy. She was beatified by Pope Clement VI, and her feast, celebrated by the whole Norbertine Order, falls on August 13. Surely an obvious lesson might be drawn from the fact that Blessed Gertrude of Aldenburg was the daughter of parents

like St. Elizabeth of Hungary and her husband, Louis. It shows the value of a saintly Catholic home environment. Green Bay, Wis.

Father R. E. C., O.Praem.

### Good Idea, But . . . !

In your November issue you published a reader's reaction to the feature letter of a previous month, *Religion for Babies*. I want to disagree with the writer of the feature letter. As I read the letter, I wondered what had happened to the wonderful tradition of a family attending Mass and Communion together. If I had waited until the youngest child was three to take my entire family to Mass together, I would still be waiting after eighteen years. We live in the country, so a sitter is out of the question. We were always told that lasting impressions are formed when you are young and that when grown children are away from home at school or in the service, the thing that keeps them from missing Mass is remembering when Sunday comes that the family will all be together at Mass. Since our children will be out of school one by one after this year, they could not have had this tradition had we followed the advice in the letter. This is one of the reasons why you should marry a Catholic we are told, so you can both go to Mass together, and not one stay home with the baby. Now I will admit there are some holy terrors in church, but nine times out of ten it is because the parents cannot control them (and a lot are over three!) Our children have always behaved very well and I think that starting them early (at two weeks) has probably been a help more than a hindrance.

Holly, Mich.

Mrs. T. O.

• *The writer of the feature letter which is commented on in the above letter did not condemn the practice of taking the babies to church before the age of three.*

*She said she preferred to wait until they were three years old before taking them to Mass, even occasionally, although she does take them even as infants to visit "our lonely Lord," when no service is in progress. We are not taking sides in this matter. But we cannot help being practical; so we ask, "What would happen if ALL the babies in the parish would be brought to Mass on Sunday?" It requires just a hint from a few babies in a crowd to get the others to join in a grand chorus of crying. We are not blaming the babies or the parents, mind you! But we have conducted a special novena service for babies, with special prayers, blessing of babies, etc. After five sentences from the pulpit we surrendered. The loudest tones of the organ could hardly be heard. We thought it was a glorious occasion and a wonderful hymn of praise and thanks to God. So we skipped the prayers and the hymns and gave each and every crying baby (and the silent ones, too) a special individual blessing. So we say: let the parents, who want to bring the babies under three years, go on with their program. The way it is working out now practically should be a burden or source of irritation to no one. A few babies in church — even many of them sometimes — even when they are crying their loudest, are a wonderful sermon from which we all can profit greatly.*

The editors

### What Does Johnny Read?

Some weeks ago my son started off in the first grade of our local Catholic school. In all this furor over educational standards today, I have been watching anxiously to see if someone would recognize the need for overhauling some of our textbooks, starting at the lowest level. Let me ask you, how long is it since you have read a first or second-grade reader? Just glance at the titles: A Trip to the Zoo, A Visit

with Grandmother, A Day at the Beach, etc. (These may not be the exact titles, but they cover the contents.) With the exception of a few stories about the priest, or a special saint's day, Catholic texts conform to the state standards in this regard. These stories are harmless enough — except in one way: they add another stone to the wall of materialism which is growing so rapidly in America today. These stories deal with pleasure for its own sake — the new sled, the ride in the car, etc., are regarded as desirable ends in themselves. What happened to the heroes of yesterday? Is it impossible to write simple, little stories of the founders of our country, or the heroes I remember from my own childhood? We laugh now at the old readers of yesterday, but children in the first grade in those days read of George Washington, King Arthur, etc. Surely, these tales of the value of honesty, chivalry and honor would be better than this emphasis upon continual fun. Parents today are subjected to a thousand pressures from TV and advertising to buy their child this toy or that gadget, or to take him here or there. Must our schools add to that pressure? The Catholic child is more fortunate than others; he is *told* stories from the Bible and stories about the saints, which will to some extent replace the Supermen and Zorros. Children need heroes and heroines. Can't they be offered someone instead of the mailman or the truckdriver whom they are influenced to look upon as the "bearers of good things for the home?" No wonder they come bounding home from school begging for a trip to the zoo or beach continually. The strangest thing about this whole situation is that I have found so few parents or educators who even seem to be aware that it exists. Perhaps my ideas are old-fashioned, but that does not necessarily mean they are wrong or ridiculous. I realize that all texts must have state approval, but there is nothing inconsistent with any religion in the ideals of

honesty, truthfulness and charity. The papers and the pulpits are loud in their complaint that adults and teen-agers seek first their own pleasure and that God comes second. If pleasure is depicted as such a highly exciting and desirable thing from the earliest grade, what can we expect? How would you like to be greeted by a first-grader (as I was) with the remark that his grandmother never takes him shopping for a new toy like the one in the story they read at school that day? Take a look at the role assigned to parents and grandparents in these books. Daddy is the man who drives them to the beach or zoo, with a stop for ice cream and such. Mother seems to do nothing but call their attention to the various wonders to be seen. And grandparents are equally obliging. In the catechism they are taught to honor their parents. Why can't the textbooks develop the same theme? All right, so I am annoyed over what may seem like a petty issue. But I am wondering if in our preoccupation with the question, "Can Johnny Read?" we are sufficiently concerned with what Johnny is reading.

Garden Grove, Calif.

Mrs. H. M.

### **This We Could not Pass up!**

How have you managed to do it? In THE LIGUORIAN you have produced a magazine that has something for everyone, on everyone's level. Our own family is only a small, limited example of this: it consists of an eighth-grader, two teen-age sons (non-readers for fear of being classified as "egg-heads") and my husband and myself (definitely egg-heads and quite selective and demanding in our reading). THE LIGUORIAN is the only one of the many excellent Catholic magazines that come each month into our home that we ALL enjoy, and we profit by its presence. Your care to include more and more articles and thoughts for groupings of persons of great variety makes this a unique magazine. It is truly eclectic in composition,

and its simplicity of presentation does not detract from its literary or intellectual appeal. My personal compliments and appreciation for your hard but successful efforts! Oakland, Calif.

Mrs. J. A. K., Jr.

• *We have been receiving a number of letters from our readers in which they ask that we publish more letters which agree with us, instead of continually finding fault and disagreeing and becoming even violent. Of course, we do receive many letters like the above, and, to be honest, we like them, too. Anybody can be inspired to greater efforts by honest words of encouragement.*

The editors

### Positive Thinking

I wonder if sometime you could have an article on *positive thinking*. From time to time I have read articles in other Catholic magazines which criticize the popular books on positive thinking. Reading these articles you might think that God wants us to live in constant fear — like scared rabbits; that if we develop such qualities as poise, courage and the ability to cope with life's difficulties we are not living Christian lives. How do you feel about this? For example, are worry and stress and tension desirable in a Christian life? Do you think that confidence and calmness and serenity are displeasing to God? I cannot believe that this is so; yet some Catholic writers imply that this is the case. After all, we are supposed to control our thoughts in regard to impurity, anger, envy, covetousness, etc. Why, therefore, can we not learn to control our other thoughts so as to eliminate all forms of negative thinking?

New York

E. V. P.

• *We believe we can say we have had a good number of articles on the subject of positive thinking — not labeled boldly as such but certainly along that line. For example, our pamphlet list, which is a list mainly of reprinted articles from our magazine, shows these titles: Don't Worry; How*

*To Get Acquainted with God; How To Get the Most out of Life; How To Get Along with Anybody; How To Get More out of Your Religion; How To Improve Your Disposition; Are You a Victim of Self-Pity? All these titles are along the line of positive thinking. The books on positive thinking which are criticized in articles in Catholic magazines probably overemphasized and oversimplified the subject, so that positive thinking is put up by them as some kind of cure-all or magic formula that will solve all problems and result in successful living all by itself and no matter what! In our articles we try to point up the fact that even negative thinking can lead to positive action, and that positive thinking all by itself, while it helps, is not enough. Religion, God's grace, the use of the means of grace must be combined with positive thinking to help us live good and useful lives.*

The editors

### Kind Words

It was my lucky day when I found your magazine in the vestibule at St. Ann's Church. I will never forget that day. I have read things in your magazine which I never knew about before, for example, making a spiritual Communion. If this letter is printed, I hope the man who left this fine magazine in the vestibule will read it and know how much good he did for me.

Milwaukee, Wis.

J. S.

I want to tell you how very much I enjoyed the recent articles: "What Do You Believe?" and "Objections To Christ." It is articles like these that keep me renewing my subscription to your magazine year after year. I believe you have helped me much to grow in the love of God and patient acceptance of His will in the crosses of daily life.

Ohio

N. N.



# WALKING

## ALONG THE STREET OF SORROWS

Most of the episodes outlined in the stations of the cross can be traced to the Gospel story or to other reliable records, but there is no guarantee that all are founded on fact.

THERE is something fascinating about the story of the devotion commonly known by us as the stations of the cross. In its singular combination of old and new, of elements reaching back to the very beginnings of Christianity, with forms which have developed and become fixed only during the past few centuries, it affords an almost typical example of the gradual growth of practices of piety.

As Catholic devotions go, the way of the cross is not very old, yet its origins reach out through space and time to the cradle days of Christianity, when first pious pilgrims sought out the places hallowed by the footsteps of the dying Saviour. The devotion we practice today was born when such pilgrimages grew too difficult or well-nigh impossible, and men were taught to join in a make-believe pilgrimage which took less than an hour's time and traveled only a few

FRANCIS A. BRUNNER, C.S.S.R.

yards, yet stimulated devotion just as much as a journey across the seas.

While the Church encourages the devotion of the stations of the cross by enriching it with many indulgences, it does not thereby certify the historical genuineness of any of the stations. For the practice is not necessarily meant to follow, in imagination, the actual steps of Christ on that awesome way of sorrow, but to stir our affections and move our will to love. As a matter of fact, however, most of the episodes outlined in the stations can be traced to the Gospel story or to other reliable historical records, but there is no guarantee that all are founded on fact. A study of the beginning of the devotion will demonstrate, in fact, that the fourteen stations, as we know them, are only remotely associated with the *Via Dolorosa* (Street of Sorrows) in Jerusalem.



### The Original Way of the Cross

TIME and successive invasions have erased many of the traces of our Lord's earthly sojourn. Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt so many times that some scholars pessimistically opine that we can have no absolute certainty about the starting-point of His way to crucifixion, no assurance where the gate was through which He left the city and but little hope of establishing the route He took to Golgotha.

Many upheavals have indeed transformed the map of the city of Jerusalem, yet surprisingly little of the city has changed radically. Often the new street was laid out right over the old one; and while some scholars maintain that the level of the city has risen as much as thirty to fifty feet, this is probably a huge exaggeration. The convent of the nuns of Our Lady of Sion is built over parts of the old Antonia and there the ancient pavement, near the traditional arch of the *Ecce Homo*, is not more than five feet below the level of the present street. It is true that nowhere, except on Calvary and at the Holy Sepulcher, can we touch soil trodden by the feet of the Redeemer, yet there is great probability that we can follow His route fairly closely.

Some modern theories regarding the location of places mentioned in the Gospels are probably as false as the traditional ones — and maybe the traditional ones are accurately placed! After all any route from the Antonia to Calvary, even the longest, could not have been more than 500 to 600 yards, and the direct route,

through the gate known as Bab-en-Nadir (in the Middle Ages known as The Sorrowful Gate), would have been only some 2500 feet in all.

There is good reason, then, to think that many of the locales fixed for the various episodes recorded in the Gospels are genuine. After all, the tradition, interrupted though it might have been, traces back to the years of the nascent Church. Pilgrimages were made to the holy places even in the days of the apostles, if we may believe St. Jerome, and there are records of such journeys dating from the second century. Melito, Bishop of Sardis and author of an *Apology* addressed to the emperor, Marcus Aurelius, made the trip to Palestine with the desire, as he said, to see with his own eyes the places where the events recorded in the Scriptures had occurred. In the fourth century, after the Constantinian Peace had been declared, this movement became widespread.

### Pilgrimages through the Centuries

SUCH pilgrimages to the Holy Land continued intermittently through the centuries, despite the Arab conquest. But it was especially in the days of the Crusades that such visits became more frequent. In 1222 the first Franciscans had come to Jerusalem and just a little more than a century later, in 1342, the friars were made the official custodians of the sites made memorable by the life and sufferings of the divine Master.

During these early years the Franciscans would organize the pilgrims touring Palestine into small groups

and would guide them around the holy places. At certain more prominent spots, like the Praetorium, Mount Olivet and Calvary, the travelers would halt to recite prayers. From this practice came the word *station*, which meant a stopping place. The earliest consistent use of the word occurs in an account by the English pilgrim, William Way, who visited the Holy Land in 1458 and 1462; in his narrative he described how the pilgrims were conducted on a tour along the route which Christ had followed in his sorrowful journey.

But the arrangement of our actual stations, though professedly made in imitation of a pilgrimage along the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem, owes less to that city and the Franciscan custodians of the holy places than to the pious imagination of a Carmelite friar, who lived all his life in Belgium, Brother John Pascha. For the devotion of the way of the cross, as we know it, originated outside Palestine, when pilgrimages became difficult or impossible, and when many who could not or would not take the risks of so long a journey desired to follow, in some way, the footsteps of the Saviour on His way to crucifixion.

Already in the fifth century a certain St. Petronius, bishop of Bologna, had constructed a group of connected chapels in the monastery of San Stefano to represent the more important shrines of Jerusalem. This same imitative tendency brought the stations, as we know them, into being. How better could one relive the tragedy of those last hours of Christ's life than by reproducing in one's own town or

village the "holy places" of faraway Palestine?

However the devotion originated, it spread rapidly, especially among the Flemings and northern Germans, and in Spain and Sardinia. Blessed Alvarez de Cordova, who died in 1420, had visited the holy places in 1405, and when he returned he had eight oratories built in the Dominican priory of Cordova to represent eight scenes of the passion of Christ. About the same time Blessed Eustochia, a Poor Clare, constructed a similar set in her convent at Messina.

In Germany and Belgium the stations consisted of any number of sculptured images or painted pictures. The most ancient form of the stations is the one at Lubeck which dates back to 1498. Perhaps the most famous of these early stations is the series built at Nuremberg in 1505. Near the end of the fifteenth century a certain Ketzel visited the Holy Land and on his return built a group in his home town, beginning at one end of the city, near the gate, where he depicted the Praetorium, and ending at the monastery of St. John, with seven stations, known as "The Seven Falls of Christ," in between. Another early group is the one at Bamberg, which was created in 1500 by a famous artisan of the period, Adam Krafft, and is still to be seen. The Louvain way of the cross, initiated by Peter Sterckx, dates from 1505 and has eight stations, different from those at Nuremberg. Another at Romans, started in 1515, at present contains forty-four stations, but the number and the particular episodes depicted

have varied during the intervening years.

### Present Form

THE originator of the stations in their present form and sequence is John Pascha (Jan van Paeschen), prior of the Carmelites at Mechlin, who died in 1502 without ever seeing Jerusalem. His work, *Peregrinatio Spiritualis* (Spiritual Pilgrimage), treats of the devotion of the stations and enumerates the various episodes to be depicted. A fellow Carmelite, Christian Andrichomius (Kruick van Andrichem), who was acquainted with Pascha's work even before it was published, listed twelve stations in his account of the devotions, in a book, *Jerusalem*, which was very popular; the twelve stations coincide with the first twelve in our present series. It is not easy to determine how the number fourteen came to be fixed or how the incidents commemorated were finally adopted by all. However, Pope Clement XII in 1731 fixed the number at fourteen — without determining the specific mysteries to be meditated — and definite approval of this arrangement was given by Pope Benedict XIV on May 10, 1742.

One of the great popularizers of the devotion was the Franciscan, St. Leonard of Port Maurice (1676-1751). Wherever he preached, in hamlet or town or city, this eloquent preacher of penance always erected the stations, either in bas-relief or with painted figures. In Rome he arranged for the erection of fourteen little chapels in the Coliseum for this devout exercise, and December 27, 1750, marked the opening of this

unique series. St. Leonard composed and published a booklet of prayers to help stimulate the mind and heart in the practice of this devotion. A contemporary of his, St. Alphonsus Li-guori, himself an indefatigable missionary and the founder of the Redemptorist Congregation, likewise published a series of reflections and prayers for the devotion of the stations of the cross. No doubt these prayers, and the missionary endeavor that popularized these prayers, helped to spread the practice of the stations far and wide.

\* \* \*

ANY person who desires to possess a genuine and effective hatred of sin and a sincere and active love of God can make a good beginning by developing a devotion to the sufferings and death of Christ, particularly as that devotion is found in the way of the cross.

The Church grants a plenary indulgence that can be applied to the suffering souls in purgatory every time the way of the cross is made with the proper dispositions of mind and heart.

The way of the cross can be made in a few minutes; the only conditions necessary for making it and for gaining the indulgences are these:

1. Have perfect sorrow for all the sins of your life.
2. Have the intention of gaining the indulgences.
3. Move from station to station.
4. At each station make some reflection and awaken some sentiment of devotion suggested by our Lord's sufferings.

# For Wives and Husbands Only



## For Catholic Parents Opposed to Catholic Schools

*Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.*

**PROBLEM:** My wife and I, both teachers in public schools, have talked over the difference between parochial and public schools at great length, and have come to the conclusion that our children should definitely go to the public schools. Our reasons are many. 1) We believe that the public school system is vastly superior to that of the Catholic schools. Public school teachers are definitely members of a dedicated profession, many holding advanced degrees. The public schools have a sound curriculum, both for dull and bright children. (I speak of the Boston area, not of the country at large.) Most important are the uncrowded classrooms, with an average of about 30 pupils to a room. 2) Parochial schools cannot and do not compare favorably with the above. They have crowded classrooms, a much shorter school year, and no provision for backward students. 3) As far as religion is concerned, our children, while attending public schools, will get a full dose of it at home. We fully intend to teach them all they need to know about religion and feel ourselves capable of doing so. Since we have taken this stand, I suppose we are guilty of sin. I have no animosity toward parochial schools, but only an intelligent realization that they are inferior. I should like your opinion on this matter.

**SOLUTION:** There is only one person designated by the Canon Law of the Church who can decide that your arguments against a Catholic school education for your children are so cogent (in your area) as to give ample grounds for making an exception to the general law of the Church in your case: that person is your bishop, or, if your bishop has delegated this power to him, your pastor. If your children have convenient access to a parochial school, and you want to be spared the serious sin of not sending them there, lay your arguments before your pastor, and he will decide, if he has the delegation, or, if he has not, will ask the bishop to decide, whether you can remain a Catholic in good standing while sending your children to a public school.

For example, if you have backward children, who could not possibly keep up with a class of 50 or 60 in a parochial school, and who would receive special needed attention in a public school classroom, we are sure the pastor (or bishop) will readily grant you the permission to let those children by-pass the parochial school for the sake of the special or corrective tutoring they need.

You have asked our opinion about your general thesis, and we shall give it frankly. Apart from the case of backward children, your concept of the total superiority of public school education over that of Catholic schools leaves many

things out of consideration. One blind spot in your vision is indicated by your odious comparison between public school teachers and the teaching nuns. You call the former "dedicated," obviously implying that the latter are not. Admitting that many public school teachers are dedicated, we can say that your orbit is very narrow if you don't know of many who cannot be dedicated in a very true sense of that word, because they are divorced mothers trying to raise a family and to teach at the same time, because they are dedicated to a false view of what makes a rounded education, etc. The sisters have the dedication of their vocation and a true philosophy of education for the soul and body of the child.

Another blind spot: Granted that it would be nicer and easier for your children to get their education in a classroom of 30 instead of one of 50 pupils, does it make no difference to you that the 50 pupils in a parochial classroom get something which the 30 in the public classroom have to be denied? Something more than unexplained readings from the Bible, and general natural principles of honesty and integrity. The 50 get the whole revealed teaching of Jesus Christ, and they get it not only from formal lessons but from the total environment of their education. It takes a lot of superiority in education about worldly wisdom to make up for that lack.

A third blind spot: You say your children will get a full dose of religion at home. I presume you mean the Catholic religion. It is hard to see how you can give a "full dose" (your words) when your very starting point is disobedience to the Catholic Church. Some day each child is going to learn about the strict law of the Catholic Church commanding parents to send their children to a Cath-

olic school. So the child may well ask: "Daddy, why don't I go to our parish Catholic school?" Your only answer must be: "Because your daddy knows more than the Catholic Church. Your daddy doesn't have to obey the Catholic Church." Where does that leave the Church (about which you plan to teach so much) in the mind of your child?

One final point: You speak at length, in your extended letter, about how much energy and intelligence you and your wife will put into teaching religion to your children at home. Would it not be much better to expend that energy and intelligence on building on the foundations of the general education the children would receive in a Catholic school? Parents can instill a love of study and books in children, even though they are in crowded classrooms at school. Parents can fill in deficiencies in a child's spelling or writing or arithmetic or history or anything else if they have the intelligence and energy you say you have. Better this than trying to make up for a complete lack of supernatural religion in the education given at school.

#### SOLD OUT

Cardinal Manning used to tell this story on himself. One day he had occasion to go to his publishers for a copy of his book, *Confidence in God*. When he made his request to the clerk, the latter called out loudly in the direction of the back office:

"Say, send up some of Manning's *Confidence in God*."

There was a pause; then a deep voice was heard to answer:

"Can't do it. Manning's *Confidence in God* is all gone."

*Our Young People*

# POINTED PARAGRAPHS

## **Catholic Weeklies**

February is Catholic press month, and in a burst of good feeling toward our competition, we wish to call the attention of our readers to three Catholic weekly magazines. Each is worthy of note in its own way. Note that we are speaking here of weekly magazines, not weekly newspapers. There are some 130 of these latter, and merely to list them would require more space than is at our disposal here. Of the former, there are three main ones, and each has its own value and significance.

*America*: This weekly journal, published by the Jesuit Fathers, and edited by Father Thurston Smith, S.J., calls itself a national, Catholic weekly review, and we believe succeeds in being as comprehensive as the title implies and its space permits. It aims to provide its readers with a good, sound background commentary on current news events of more than passing significance. Its articles deal with prominent figures and with noteworthy trends in the political, economic and religious scene, but they rest on a foundation of sound Catholic principles. In its literary editor, Father Harold Gardiner, S.J., *America* has an outstanding Catholic critic of the literary scene, one who writes

with grace and clarity in his comments and reviews of current books. *America* also publishes reviews of current movies, plays and music.

Address: 70 E. 45th St., New York 17, N.Y. Price: \$8.00 per year.

*Ave Maria*: This weekly, with a long and venerable ancestry, is published by the Holy Cross Fathers at Notre Dame, Indiana, and is presently edited by Father John Reedy. It presents a lively commentary on current events and trends in popular style. It lacks the depth and solidity of the reporting in *America*, but perhaps for that very reason its appeal is to a somewhat wider audience. Its editorial staff has done much within recent months to brighten its pages with up-to-the-minute interviews and discussions on such subjects as parish support, lay Catholic action, and lay spirituality. Several good columnists (Joe Breig among them) appear regularly in its pages.

Address: Notre Dame, Ind. Subscription price: \$6.00 per year.

*Commonweal*: Here is a magazine that in its day has stirred up considerable controversy. It has taken positions and defended causes which sometimes were not popular, and occasionally it has found itself in disagreement with some sections of the



clergy. Catholics should not throw up their hands over this. As the *Commonweal* says of itself, "There is nothing in the masthead to indicate that the magazine is the organ of the Church. As a wholly independent lay weekly, which is primarily concerned with the temporal order — the specific province of the layman — the *Commonweal* clearly cannot claim to speak for the Church." In its pages are discussed the thorny social and political problems of the day as a Catholic layman might discuss them, speaking what is in his own mind. For the well-educated Catholic, there can be much stimulation in its pages.

Address: *The Commonweal*, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y.

Subscription price: \$8.00 per year.

### **Light a Candle!**

On the second day of February, which is called Candlemas Day, in thousands of Catholic churches, millions of candles will be blessed. Many of these candles will then be lighted and carried in procession. Millions of candles will be stowed away in sacristies to be used in divine services during the year. Thousands of these blessed candles, in neat little boxes or in white or brown wrapping paper, will be carried home by men and women and children of faith to be put in a safe place, so that a blessed candle may be lighted during a storm when the lightning flashes and the thunder pounds.

Some of these candles will be lighted to glow like a guiding star in the darkened room of death, if a member of the family should be called home to heaven during the year.

February, 1959

The Church blesses candles and lights them on Candlemas Day because on this day Christ, Who is the Light of the World, was brought into the temple and offered to His almighty Father.

Whenever an act of worship is carried on in church, whenever a Mass is offered, whenever a sacrament, except confession, is administered, the burning candles are always there to help us by their light to think of Him Who is the Light of the World.

A lighted candle was given to us at baptism to help us remember the light of faith God gave us and the brilliance of the sanctifying grace we received. A lighted candle shining near us is still teaching its lesson when we leave this world in death. The light of the candle is above us in our coffin to help our loved ones to be mindful of our soul and to pray: "Let perpetual light shine upon them!"

Take a candle to church on Candlemas Day to have it blessed. Bring it home and light it for a while when all the members of the family are together. You need not say any special prayers. Just let the candle burn quietly to remind all of you of the light of faith that is yours and of the light of sanctifying grace that is shining brightly within you — the light that should go out from you to lead others from darkness into the light.

### **Help Them To Understand!**

A great number of Protestants who still possess a sincere, fundamental Christianity, which means belief in the divinity of Christ, the necessity of baptism, the reality of heaven and hell, etc., are intensely interested in



Catholic publications when they get the opportunity to read them.

The *pagan* American is not so easily interested; in fact the average American pagan has an attitude toward anything pertaining to religion that is similar to the attitude of the indifferent and nominal Catholic. There are, nevertheless, even pagans, and many of them, who recognize the lack of something important in their lives, and who find a kind of solace and satisfaction in reading about what religion means to someone else. This is especially true of those pagans who have been the victims of the purely secular and non-religious training which they have received from their parents and teachers, and who have, nevertheless, retained a natural sense of morality and goodness. It is also true of those who are beginning to understand, even vaguely, that there can be no order and no security in society without some form of religion, even though they possess no religion themselves.

Protestants, pagans and Jews have been known to comment on articles in Catholic publications which were shown to them, in terms of vigorous agreement, commendation and support. Many of them, attracted by the reasoning process used in regard to specific and sometimes relatively unimportant Catholic truths, have been led to examine the Catholic position as a whole and from there to a final, joyous and soul-satisfying surrender to the truth.

If in one's own circle of acquaintances there are non-Catholics who express uncertainty or interest or

even ignorant and erroneous ideas of what Catholics believe and do — and why — then the easiest and most effective way of helping them out of their confusion is to give them some copies of a well-chosen Catholic publication, or pamphlet, or booklet, or even a penny leaflet. What is given to them as reading matter may not even deal directly with the point of their doubt or question, but the line of thought and reasoning will almost surely give the impression that there is an answer, in Catholic teaching, to what had seemed unanswerable before.

### **Everybody's Pontiff**

Looking through back issues of *THE LIGUORIAN*, we have been amazed at how often we used excerpts from the addresses and encyclicals of the late Holy Father, Pope Pius XII. We did not use this material merely because he was pope; it was rather because the expression of his thought so often seemed both original and profound, and was joined besides with a unique grace and felicity of style.

Astonishing indeed was the range of subjects on which he spoke and wrote. This was due no doubt to the fact that so many diverse groups sought audience with him when they visited Rome. For each group there was not just a formal expression of cordiality; there was in addition a penetrating spiritual analysis of their aim and some phase of their work.

Reading through the index of *The Pope Speaks*, that excellent quarterly collection of papal addresses in Eng-

lish, one is literally astonished at the range of topics treated by the Holy Father at one time or another. Here are just a few, culled at random.

To doctors and medical personnel, he spoke of X-ray, antibiotics, polio, dietetics, prolongation of life, corneal transplantation, heart disease, cancer, anesthesia and mental illness.

Industrialists heard him discourse learnedly on banking, railroads, mechanization, automation, metallurgy, nuclear power, farming and tobacco production.

He spoke with equal facility to scientists about microbiology, geodetics and the secrets of outer space. He had words of advice for book critics and translators. Such diverse topics as music and ceramics found him well-informed.

Fashion designers were perhaps surprised to hear him speak in a knowledgeable way of their problems. Gymnasts, basketball players, soccer teams and touring baseball stars found him keenly interested in the field of sports, encouraging them, while at the same time pointing up the primacy of the spiritual in life. Radio, TV and the movies all merited his attention; his encyclical letter *Miranda Prorsus*, on the movies, is one of the great documents in its field. Journalists were especially his friends, as were soldiers and sailors, who it seemed could always find him cheerfully awaiting them in audience. Even for that one class who could not come to him his fatherly heart went out: he had special words for prisoners in every land.

Truly he was everybody's pope. Other popes have been great in their own way. Pius XII will surely be remembered as unique because there was united in him profound thought, great personal holiness and a warmth of human affection which even the whole world at his doorstep could not exhaust.

### How Good Must I Be?

It was not intended by Christ that His followers should be content with the minimum amount of service required for the salvation of their souls. He wanted all to try continually to be perfect according to their state in life. He said: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." He said: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven."

In many other ways did Christ make known His will that all who believe in Him should try to grow in holiness and virtue. The perfection He desires of His disciples means two things.

First of all, it means freedom even from venial sin. Too many Christians limit their fear of sin only to mortal sin. In practice they make little effort to overcome daily tendencies to venial sin. They are content to remain addicted to the smaller sins of profanity in speech, anger and impatience, lying, petty stealing, unkind conversation about others, wilful distractions at prayer, etc. Such sins frequently lead to mortal sin; they give scandal to the non-Catholic world; but above all their frequent commission keeps the soul in a state of imperfection and

mediocrity that signifies gross indifference to the will of Christ.

The perfection Christ expects of His disciples means also positive growth in virtue and in friendship and union with Christ. Virtue is promoted in a Christian by growth in understanding what virtue is, and by repeated acts of virtue, and by use of the means of grace.

Some persons have no interest in learning more and more about the various virtues, and thus they do not know how to "grow." Others permit selfishness, human respect and passion to impede their practice of virtue.

Union with Christ means not only living in sanctifying grace, but striving to increase sanctifying grace by a

growing spirit and habit of prayer and by frequent reception of the sacraments. It also means striving to remain more and more consciously united to Christ through frequent good intentions, acts of thanksgiving and expressions of love and praise to God.

Perfection in these meanings which we have enumerated and explained is the proper goal of every true Christian. The power of the true faith to transform the world and to win converts would be immeasurably increased if only more and more Christians would at least make the effort to reach the goal which Christ has set before them.

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### DIPLOMACY

During a visit to military installations in Pakistan an American general was escorted by an interpreter-guide who was remarkably suave, adept, and who had a good command of the English language. The general was particularly impressed with his escort's capability when he took occasion to relate a rather lengthy anecdote and the audience promptly broke into hearty laughter.

Since the guide had spoken only a few words to the group, the general remarked, "You certainly told my little story quickly, and quite effectively, too. I noticed the people all laughed."

"Yes," said the guide. "Story too long to explain. So I said: 'The American general has just told a joke. Everyone please laugh.'"

*Quote*

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There are 35,000,000 people in this country who are over-weight and there are ten million more who could afford to trim off a few pounds. These, of course, are ROUND figures.

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It taketh age to make a sage  
The wise no longer doubt it;  
The older we grow, the more we know  
But *the less we brag about it.*

# LIGUORIANA

## HERALDS OF THE TRUTH

By St. Alphonsus Liguori  
Selected and Edited by  
John P. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.

**A** MOST convincing proof of the divine origin of our faith is to be drawn from the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments of Sacred Scripture. Inscribed in the Bible long before the events took place, they were afterward fulfilled and found to be true in all of their circumstances.

Let us consider a number of these prophecies and draw from them their unavoidable conclusions.

The first of these prophecies concerns the time of the advent of the Messiah. The author of the Book of Genesis places it after the fall of the scepter from Juda: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations." (Genesis 49:10)

In fact, the Messiah did come just at the time when the reign of Juda ended. After Pompey had imposed a tax on the Jews for the first time, and after the Roman senate had established Herod as king of Judea, it was then precisely that Jesus Christ was born. The historian, Josephus, tells us that Herod was a foreigner. After the death of both Herod and his son

Archelaus, Caesar made Judea a province of the Roman empire. And although the Jews still retained a bit of authority, still, after the death of Christ, Vespasian and Titus completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and annihilated the kingdom of the Jews.

The prophecies also foretold that the Messiah would be born of a virgin: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." (Isaias 7:14)

They also foretold the place where He would be born: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." (Micheas 5:2)

Such a minute detail as the adoration of the Magi, we find predicted: "The kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts and all kings of the earth shall adore Him." (Psalms 71:10) They even speak of His herald or precursor: "The voice of one crying in the desert, prepare ye the way of the Lord." (Isaias 40:3)

About the passion and death of Christ the prophecies are most detailed. They foretell it in all of its circumstances: He was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver: "And they

weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver." (Zacharias 11:12) His hands and feet were to be pierced with nails and He would be stretched upon the cross, so that the bones of His body could be counted: "They dug my hands and my feet; they numbered all my bones." (Psalms 71:17) He was to be given gall and vinegar to drink: "And they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psalms 68:22) His garments would be divided among the executioners: "They parted my garments amongst them; and upon my vesture they cast lots." (Psalms 21:19)

And they predicted that after His death the Jewish people would no longer have a king. They would be without sacrifice, altar, high priests and prophets. "For the children of Israel shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and without theraphim." (Osee 3:4)

We may well wonder at the blindness of the Jews. They saw all of these prophecies of the Scriptures fulfilled so minutely concerning the advent of the Messiah. And yet they obstinately persisted in believing that He had not come.

Our Lord Himself lamented this obstinacy of the Jews. Prophesying the fall of the city of Jerusalem He wept over her destiny: "Seeing the city, he wept over it saying. . . . For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and

straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone." (Luke 19:41-44)

Without temple, without homeland, despised by all nations, everywhere foreigners, everywhere maltreated, the Jews today reveal only too well the fulfillment of this prophecy of Christ. In spite of this, however, they remain obstinate in their belief that the Messiah is still to come.

We must distinguish a twofold coming of Christ into the world. He was to come as a Redeemer, to suffer and to die. This first appearance has already taken place, as it was foretold. He is to come again, in splendor, as a judge. This second appearance has not yet taken place. The Jews, however, having no stomach for the Messiah as poor, humble and persecuted, such as was Christ the Redeemer, obstinately confound the first coming with the second. Hence they embraced only the writings which spoke of a powerful and glorious Christ, as Jesus Christ will actually be when He appears again as Judge.

The prophecies concerning the new Church, the condemnation of the Jews and the election of the Gentiles are countless. "You are not my people and I will not be yours." (Osee 1:9) "A people, which I knew not, hath served me." (Psalms 17:45) "All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord. And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in his sight."

(Psalms 21:28-29) "All the kings of the earth shall adore him: all nations shall serve him." (Psalms 71:11) "Behold I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth." (Isaias 49:6)

All of the prophecies, too, made by Jesus Christ in the New Testament concerning the resurrection, the conversion of the Gentiles and the martyrdom of the apostles have been fulfilled.

Nor is there any room to believe that these prophecies were written af-

ter the events, for the Gospels had been scattered throughout the world from the early days of the Church and were translated into many languages. Then, too, the events foretold did not occur until many years later. Consequently, it was impossible to falsify so many copies all over the earth.

Therefore, after viewing all the prophecies of both the Old and the New Testament, we must conclude that it requires a greater effort to remain in unbelief than to adopt the faith of Jesus Christ.

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#### BELIEF AND UNDERSTANDING

An agnostic professor was one day walking down the road when he chanced to see a farmer standing at the edge of a field.

"Tell me," said the professor, "do you believe in things that you don't understand?"

"Certainly, I do. Don't you?" was the reply.

"Not at all. No intelligent person believes in anything that can't be explained by his reason."

The farmer ruminated over this for a moment, then he said:

"Do you see that cow, sheep and hen there in the field?"

"Why, yes, what about them?"

"Well why is it that though they all feed from the same field, hair comes up on the cow, wool on the sheep, and feathers on the chicken?"

The professor continued his walk — a little nonplussed.

*St. Joseph's Lilies*

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#### MIRROR FOR CHRISTIANS

A lot of Christians are like wheelbarrows . . . not good unless pushed.

Some are like canoes . . . need to be paddled.

Some are like kites . . . if you don't keep a string on them, they fly away.

Some are like kittens . . . content when petted.

Some are like footballs . . . you can't tell where they'll bounce next.

Some are like balloons . . . full of air and ready to blow up.

Some are like trailers . . . they have to be pulled.

Some are like neon lights . . . keep going on and off.

But some are like a good watch . . . open of face, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works.

*The Dairyman*





# BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Tobin, C.S.S.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in **THE LIGUORIAN** be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to **THE LIGUORIAN** for further information.

**James Gillis, Paulist**

**James F. Finley, C.S.P.**

One of the greatest preachers and writers of our generation was Father James Gillis, the Paulist. In the pages of the **Catholic World**, in weekly syndicated column, **Sursum Corda**, and for many years on the **Catholic Hour** Father Gillis enjoyed a wide and loyal following. A confrere, Father James F. Finley, has written an informal and chatty biography of this well-known figure. He has succeeded in making Father Gillis live by not hesitating to point out his weak as well as his strong points. Readers will enjoy this personal narrative of a great man as seen in his public as well as private life in the religious community to which he gave so many priestly years. This human touch would make this book especially effective for public reading in the refectory of religious communities.

(Hanover House, \$3.95)

## **St. Catherine Laboure' of the Miraculous Medal**

**Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M.**

For over eleven years Father Dirvin gathered material from documents and personal visits to the places connected with the life of **St. Catherine Laboure'**. This has resulted in what the publishers call a definitive biography that draws upon all the known sources, even previously undiscovered documents, of the life of the saint. The wonderful story of Catherine and the miraculous medal is found in a simple and authentic narrative. It is interesting to learn that Catherine was not even known to her religious companions as the one to whom the Blessed Mother had appeared. Besides the life of St. Catherine the author gives some of the history of the devotion to the miraculous medal and includes the conversion of Alphonse Ratisbonne. An informative and inspirational biography.

(Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, \$3.50)



### **The Catholic Viewpoint on Marriage and the Family**

John L. Thomas, S.J.

This third volume of the *Catholic Viewpoint* series explains the Catholic doctrine and practice on the family. The author, Father John L. Thomas, is a sociologist who has specialized in the study of the modern American family. The first chapters set the problem of the Catholic theory and practice which is at variance in so many ways with the accepted American family life. The remaining chapters give a brief but thorough explanation of Catholic teaching and a refutation of modern errors. A final chapter explains modern Catholic group efforts to better Catholic family life. An excellent book for all who seek a deeper understanding of American family culture and the *Catholic Viewpoint* on this very important subject.

(Hanover House, \$3.50)

### **The Quiet Light**

Louis De Wohl

In a private audience with the author Pope Pius XII suggested that the author turn his talents to a novel about St. Thomas Aquinas. *The Quiet Light* captures the spirit of the troubled times as well as the gentle personality of the great scholar. A good example of fine historical writing that blends the true facts with a romantic tale of Thomas' sister and an English knight.

(Image, \$.95)

### **An American Amen**

John La Farge

In a previous autobiographical book, *The Manner is Ordinary*, Father John La Farge, priest, journalist, sociologist for over 50 years, recorded the events of his life which brought him in contact with many aspects of American and Catholic life. The present book is, in a sense, a sequel which presents his philosophy on life.

In his own words: "My life philosophy . . . is one of confidence, expressed in the word Amen. My reason for writing this book is the hope of conveying something of this confidence to others. In part one, I speak as an American, of our responsibility to our country. In part two, I talk as a priest, of our responsibility to ourselves, in order that we may reach right decisions. In part three I venture some impressions I have formed as to the responsibility of intellectuals to the human race as a whole."

Father La Farge's frank and penetrating observations will be of value to the intellectual searching for truth as well as to the serious reader who desires a better understanding of America, Catholicism, and the world.

(Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, \$3.75)

**Rabbits in the Hay**

Jane Lane

Jane Lane, the English historical novelist and biographer, has published her second book in America. *Rabbits in the Hay* is the story of the Bobbington plot to aid Mary, Queen of Scots, against Queen Elizabeth. Miss Lane shows how this plot was really a trap set by Walsingham to get rid of Mary. Like *Rabbits in the Hay* trapped by the harvesters, the protagonists were driven into the trap set by the agents of Elizabeth. This simple tale is a fast-moving one that captures the interest of readers. It is a selection of the Thomas More Book Club.

(Newman, \$3.50)

**A Dictionary of Saints**

Donald Attwater

The co-editor of the revised 4-volume edition of Butler's *Lives of the Saints* has compiled a short biographical dictionary of the saints. A few lines indicate the salient facts about the Saint or Blessed and give volume and page references to fuller treatment in Butler. The alphabetical order of entries makes this a very handy reference work.

(P. J. Kenedy and Sons, \$3.95)

**The Church's Year of Grace**

Dr. Pius Parsch

This is the fifth and last volume of the translation of the well-known commentary on the liturgy by one of the great liturgical leaders of Germany, Pius Parsch, the Augustinian monk. It follows the order of the previous volumes in its external division into the Proper of the Season and Proper of the Saints as well as in the internal development of points from the Mass and divine office. There is also a rather full meditation for the Sundays. An excellent book for the religious as well as the layman who wants to drink deeper of the great source of piety that is the official prayer-life of the Church. *The Church's Year of Grace* will make its way into many libraries as one of the great books on the liturgy. It is hoped that it receives the devout reading that it richly deserves.

(Liturgical Press, \$4.00, cloth.  
\$2.75, paper)**Know Yourself**

Joseph Malaise, S.J.

Father Joseph Malaise spent most of his years at the University of San Francisco and gained great popularity as a director of souls. *Know Yourself* contains in short statements fundamental principles about the vices and virtues. A practical book for frequent consultation.

(Academy Library Guild, \$2.50)

## BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

### **Catholic Treasury Books Courageous Catherine The Amazing John Tabb Brother Dutton of Molokai**

Sister Raymond Marie  
Eva K. Betz  
Howard E. Crouch

Bruce Publishing Company has planned its Catholic Treasury Books of biographical novels to make the young reader of 10 or older familiar with some of the great figures of the Catholic heritage. All of the books are well written and illustrated by good pen and ink sketches.

**Courageous Catherine** is the story of Mother Catherine McAuley, the Irish girl who founded the Sisters of Mercy.

**The Amazing John Tabb** records the life of the Confederate soldier who became a convert, a priest and a good poet.

**Brother Dutton of Molokai** presents the well-known layman who was the companion of Father Damien.

(\$2.00, each)

### **The Apostles of the Lord** Catherine and Robb Beebe

The talented husband and wife team of the Beebes collaborated on the story of each of the apostles chosen by Christ. They portray the apostles in their calling by Christ, their companionship with Him, and their efforts to spread the doctrine of Christ.

(Bruce, \$2.50)

### **Christian Child's Stories God is Everywhere Above the Blue My Little Book of Feasts**

Rae Detting  
Mary Catherine Rose  
Roth Ruhman  
Alvin J. Schumacher  
Ron Ceszynsk

The Christian Child's Stories are hard-covered books with simple text and colored illustrations. **God is Everywhere** consists of verses showing God in nature. **Above the Blue** are whimsical stories of the saints in heaven. **My Little Book of Feasts** contains short descriptions of some feasts of our Lord, our Lady and the saints.

(Bruce Publishing Co. \$.50 each)

### Catholicism

Henri De Lubac, S.J.

The prominent French theologian Father Henri De Lubac, S.J., seeks to answer a very modern objection to the claims of the Catholic Church. This objection maintains that the Catholic Church is interested in the personal salvation of souls and has nothing to offer the group in the here and now. The subtitle, *A Study of the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, reveals that the author stresses the role of the Church as a society of individuals seeking to apply the merits of the divine Redeemer to individuals as well as society. A learned study for those who seek a better understanding of the Church.

(Sheed and Ward, \$4.00)

### Saints of the Missal

Benedict Baur, O.S.B.

Reflections on the virtues of the saints indicated by the proper of the Mass. Vol. II. Covers July to December.

(Herder, \$3.95)

### Bought at a Great Price

Mother Mary Aloysi, S.N.D.

Reflections on the Precious Blood by experienced writer.

(Messenger Press, \$3.50)

## BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

### MOST POPULAR

(Not necessarily approved. Roman numeral indicates a moral rating according to categories used in general list.)

Women and Thomas Harrow (IIa)—*Marquand*

Doctor Zhivago (IIa)—*Pasternak*

Around the World with Auntie

Mame (IIa)—*Dennis*

The King Must Die (IIb)—*Renault*

The Enemy Camp (III)—*Weidman*

Anatomy of a Murder (IIb)—*Traver*

The Best of Everything (IV)—*Jaffe*

The Image Makers (IIb)—*Dryer*

Chez Pavan (IIa)—*Llewellyn*

The Time of the Dragons (IIa)—

*Ekert-Rotholz*

Exodus (IIb)—*Uris*

The Once and Future King (IIa)—*White*

The Day on Fire (III)—*Ullman*

Angelique (IV)—*Golon*

Lolita (IV)—*Nabokov*

### I. Suitable for general reading:

Extreme License—*Barry*

Hear the Train Blow—*Beebe & Clegg*

The Port of London Murders—*Bell*

The Pick of Punch—*Bentley*  
 It's All in the Family—*Berenstain*  
 A Pictorial Treasury of Opera in America—*Blum*  
 The Spirit of 'Seventy Six—*Com-mager & Morris*  
 Christmas Stocking—*Considine*  
 Bizet and His World—*Curtiss*  
 Anecdotes of Destiny—*Dinesen*  
 Tistou of the Green Thumb—*Druon*  
 The Civil War: A Narrative—*Foote*  
 Cold Noses and Warm Hearts—*Ford*  
 You Can Always Tell a Fisherman—*Ford*  
 Claudia Omnibus—*Franken*  
 The Burning of Troy—*Gair*  
 A Treasury of Golden Memories—*Giniger*  
 Beware of the Dog—*Giovanetti*  
 The Wonderful World of Aunt Tuddy—*Gury & Knight*  
 Harbor of Little Boats—*Huntsberry*  
 The Double Dealers—*Klein*  
 The Body in the Silo—*Knox*  
 The American Heritage Book of the Revolution—*Lancaster & Plumb*  
 More Brother Juniper—*McCarthy*  
 Merry Christmas, Happy New Year—*McGinley*  
 Miss Peach—*Mell*  
 Leyte—*Morison*  
 The Saturday Evening Post Carnival of Humor—*Nickles*  
 The Most of S. J. Perelman—*Perelman*  
 Lightning Strikes Twice—*Potts*  
 Young Pillars—*Schulz*  
 The Atlantic Book of British and American Poetry—*Sitwell*  
 Confessions of Mrs. Smith—*Smith*  
 Cyrano—*Taylor*  
 Treasury Agent: The Inside Story—*Tully*  
 The Common Soldier in the Civil War—*Wiley*  
 The Graces of Christmas—*Wuellner*  
 Pebble in a Pool—*Yates*

## II. Suitable only for adults:

### A. Because of advanced style and contents:

The Idea of Freedom—*Adler*  
 The Empty Shrine—*Barrett*  
 Crescendo—*Bentley*  
 The Scent of the New Mown Hay—*Blackburn*  
 Herblock's Special for Today—*Block*  
 The Faith and the Flame—*Houston*  
 The Catholic Marriage Manual—*Kelly*  
 Literary Distractions—*Knox*  
 Scent of Danger—*MacKenzie*  
 More in Anger—*Mannes*  
 Marriage on the Rocks—*Rose*  
 Stalingrad—*Schroter*  
 The Rainbow and the Rose—*Shute*  
 Catholic Viewpoint on Marriage and the Family—*Thomas*  
 Brothers and Sisters Have I None—*Usher*  
 Lost Victories—*von Manstein*  
 The Moonflower—*Whitney*  
 The Catholic Concept of Love and Marriage—*Woods*

### B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

The Inseparables—*Bancroft*  
 The Longest Way Round—*Cole*  
 The Bone Pickers—*Dewlen*  
 The Long Night—*Mayfield*  
 Out of My Heart—*Turnbull*  
 The Bright Young Things—*Vail*

## III. Permissible for the discriminating adult:

Venus in Sparta—*Auchincloss*  
 Mission Accomplished—*Beti*  
 Love, Skill and Mystery—*Bovet*  
 Strike Heaven on the Face—*Calitri*

## IV. Not recommended to any reader:

The Insider—*Kelly*  
 The Best of Everything—*Jaffe*  
 Angelique—*Golon*  
 Lolita—*Nabokov*

# LUCID INTERVALS

A rugged mountaineer suffered a stroke, but seemed to improve after the crisis was over. A friend called to see how he was feeling.

"Fair to middlin' these days," confided the patient. "No pain; eatin' an sleepin' right well, and I'm able to drive to town, fetch the groceries and go to church."

Then, as an afterthought, he added: "Of course, my mind is gone, but I don't miss it much."

Priest (baptizing): "And what do you want to call the twins?"

Nervous Father: "Steak and Kidney."

Priest: "Oh, all ye saints of heaven! Am I hearing things?"

Patient Mother: "He means Kate and Sidney."

A young fellow was learning to play the saxophone and was pretty unpopular in the neighborhood. Riding down in the elevator one morning, he became engaged in conversation with another tenant in the building in which he lived.

"Tell me honestly," he said, "does my practicing make you nervous?"

"It used to, when I first heard the other tenants complaining about it," replied the other, "but now I don't care what happens to you."



"I just saw your family ghost upstairs," gasped a man who was visiting an old mansion.

"Did it give you a start?" asked his host. Replied the guest, "I didn't need one."

*Farmer's Weekly*

The head of a local business recently returned from his annual two weeks with pay.

"How was your vacation?" inquired an office worker.

"Fine," he replied, "but there's nothing like the feel of a good desk under your heels again!"

It has not become well known, but a hair-cutting machine was invented in Russia in 1745. It was really a miracle; a hood was placed over the client's head, the barber pressed a button, there was a little humming sound from the scissors, the hood was removed, and there was the completed haircut!



All the onlookers were enthusiastic. "Wonderful! But each person's head is a different shape."

"Only *before* they've had their first haircut by this machine," explained the inventor.

## FILE 13

Cheerful people, the doctors say, resist disease better than the glum ones. In other words, the surly bird catches the germ.

*Nuggets*

One of the most difficult card tricks is to stop some people from doing them.

The man who thinks he is smart enough to be his own lawyer should try hard to stay out of trouble.

# How to Write a Letter to THE LIGUORIAN

**Y**OUR letter to THE LIGUORIAN may fall into one of these three groups:

1. Letters about your subscription;
2. Letters giving a change of address;
3. Letters asking a question or presenting a problem to be answered by personal letter or in the columns of the magazine.

## I. Letters about subscriptions

If you are sending in a *new subscription* please write clearly or print your name, address, city, zone and state. Indicate the length of time you wish your subscription to run: one, two or three years.

If you are *renewing your subscription*, please state plainly that it is a renewal and give us the expiration date as shown above the name stamped on your magazine or clip and send along your stamped address from an old issue of the magazine.

If you are *giving someone a gift subscription*, state clearly the name of the person who is to receive the gift, whether it is a new gift or a renewal (if you know); also give the correct address of the recipient together with city, postal zone and state. Give your own name and address. Tell us explicitly if you wish the gift to be anonymous or if you desire to have a gift card sent.

If you are sending a remittance for a subscription which has already begun and for which you have been billed, please state that fact.

If you inform us that you are not receiving your regular copy of THE LIGUORIAN, send a copy of your name

and address as stamped on your magazine.

If you are ordering the magazine in bulk for sale on pamphlet or magazine racks, give the name of the person or organization that is responsible for payment.

Address all such letters to

THE LIGUORIAN  
Redemptorist Fathers  
Liguori, Missouri

## II. Change of address

Please give us advance notice of a change in your address and allow four weeks for the change to become effective. Send your new address with your old address. If possible clip your name and old address from a copy of your magazine.

## III. Letters with questions or problems

If you have a question to ask of the editors, a personal problem to be answered by letter, or if you write a letter for the READERS RETORT department, please address your letter to

THE EDITORS  
THE LIGUORIAN  
Liguori, Missouri

**P**LEASE do not put money or a check in an envelope and send it to us without some indication of the purpose of the remittance. Tell us clearly whether the money is for a new subscription, or for a subscription for which you were billed, or for a renewal of your subscription.

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